

TREATY EDUCATION IN SASKATCHEWAN  
IN AN ERA OF RECONCILIATION

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By

JENNIFER LEE GALLAYS

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OR

Dean  
College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
University of Saskatchewan  
116 Thorvaldson Building, 110 Science Place  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5C9 Canada

## ABSTRACT

In 2008, K-12 Treaty Education was mandated in the province of Saskatchewan. This study aims to learn what the supports and obstacles are for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) provided a Treaty resource kit in 2008. Research participants shared their thoughts on the resources made available to them. Treaty Education is embedded across all curricular areas, and as such, participants were asked to share where they are locating resources for student use across curricula. This study examines how participants teach students concepts of power and privilege and how these topics are received by their students. The qualitative research involved semi-structured interviews with 11 educators, highly invested in Treaty Education, from Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. A comprehensive review of the literature and content analysis of the Treaty resource kit was undertaken to triangulate the data. The study found that the Treaty Education kit is in disuse and participants struggle to find appropriate resources for student use. Participants undertaking an anti-racist approach to Treaty Education periodically encounter resistance from White students and parents. Participants who possess the support of an administrator were more likely to engage confidently in Treaty Education. In conclusion, Treaty Education would be greatly supported by an alignment of curriculum and the creation and aggregation of appropriate resources for student use. The education system should shift away from liberal forms of multiculturalism towards critical multicultural or anti-racist approaches where educators teach students about hidden forms of power and how to disrupt the structures that marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. Professional development should aim to help White educators develop healthy racial identities and cultural competency. Additionally professional development that aims to uncover hidden forms of power, and how to teach students about power and privilege will be necessary in moving Treaty Education forward. This study provides information for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Saskatchewan school divisions, and teacher education programs.

*Keywords:* Treaty Education, OTC Treaty Education kit, critical multiculturalism, anti-racist education, professional development, teacher education, critical discourse analysis, critical theory, hegemony, curriculum,

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Thank you to the participants of this study. I am honored that you trusted me to share your thoughts on Treaty Education. I'm hopeful that I successfully amplified your voices. Collectively we can make Treaty Education a powerful force for positive change.

## DEDICATION

I'd like to dedicate this work to my family, including the past and future generations. My Métis ancestors who came before me lost so much, but they were still resilient. The generations who will come after me will grow up knowing Canada's true history. I dedicate this work to the generations of the past as a thank you and a promise. The promise is that future generations will know our history, and they will come to understand the power dynamics that have brought us to this place. Future generations will understand the need to disrupt colonization in order to rebuild systems that value every member of our society, especially the Indigenous inhabitants who agreed to share this Land. To my own children, Keanan, Ethan, and Adam, thank you for allowing me this time to focus on this work while you waited in the wings for my attention. May Treaty Education help you recognize the power within to make this world a better kinder plac

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

OTC: Office of the Treaty Commissioner

NDP: New Democratic Party

FTV: Following their Voices

HBC: Hudson's Bay Company

MC: Multicultural perspective

AR: Anti-racist perspective

FNMEPAC: First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee

FNME: First Nations Métis Education

ATFSL: A Time for Significant Learning

SSBA: Saskatchewan School Boards Association

ESSP: Education Sector Strategic Plan

SPSD: Saskatoon Public School Division

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

STF: Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

Alt.: Alternative

APTN: Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CSRP: Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

“We are all Treaty people” is a phrase that Saskatchewan school children should be familiar with and understand. However, ask their parents if we are all Treaty people and you might hear a resounding “no.” The reason for this generational gap in knowledge is due to the fact that the adults of Saskatchewan have never received any formal kindergarten through grade 12 Treaty Education. On September 15, 2008, Saskatchewan became the first province in the entire country of Canada to mandate kindergarten to grade 12 Treaty Education. This date was significant in that it was also the 134th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 4. (Government of Saskatchewan, 2008). On this same day, the Saskatchewan Government issued a press release in which they quoted Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) Bill McNight who said, “All Saskatchewan residents are the beneficiaries of Treaty. Treaties are the foundation on which we built our province” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2008). As educators, we are now over a decade into teaching mandatory Treaty Education. It is important to take stock of what we have accomplished, and where further work is required.

In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada issued 94 calls to action:

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015)

Several of those calls to action were intended for education. This research is in response to the 63<sup>rd</sup> call to action, which states:

We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues, including:

- (i.) Developing and implementing Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Indigenous peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- (ii.) Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Indigenous history.
- (iii.) Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above (“Truth and Reconciliation,” 2015).

In responding to these calls to action, this research asks committed Treaty educators in Saskatchewan schools to share their thoughts on Treaty Education.

## **1.1 Research Question:**

What are supports and obstacles for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan?

### **1.1.2 Research Sub-Questions:**

- What are some of the specific ways that the OTC Treaty resource kit is being utilized by teachers engaged in Saskatchewan classrooms?
- How are Saskatchewan teachers thinking about Treaty resources that have been made available to them?
- How and where are teachers locating and creating resources on their own to fulfil the mandate of Treaty Education?
- How do teachers address White privilege when engaging with Treaty Education?

## **1.2 Purpose**

Treaty Education is an important first step in acknowledging Canada's colonial past and the ongoing ramifications of colonization on the First Peoples. Canada is a country with a dark past — the Land was stolen and settled, treaties were promised and have mostly gone unfulfilled, and the Indian Act brought about residential schools and cultural genocide (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015). As we move forward with reconciliation, students need to have a clear understanding of this history.

If we, as a society, want to truly create an anti-racist and anti-oppressive society for all citizens, then Treaty Education, with an anti-racist and anti-oppressive approach must be a part of this process. Giroux (2010) makes the case for education as a tool to examine power structures and move us towards a more just society. Giroux states:

According to Freire, critical thinking was not about the task of simply reproducing the past and understanding the present. To the contrary, it was about offering a way of thinking beyond the present, soaring beyond the immediate confines of one's experiences, entering into a critical dialogue with history, and imagining a future that would not merely reproduce the present. (p. 716)

It is imperative, therefore, that we understand what constitutes best practice when teachers engage in Treaty Education. Educators have an opportunity to learn from each other as they share their successes and challenges. One of the challenges, however, is that teachers work in isolation in their own classrooms and do not often have an opportunity to learn about what others are doing to engage students in the critical pedagogy that is Treaty Education. Teachers are also under time constraints in their ever increasing and intensifying workloads. Borrowing the best ideas and resources from each other helps us to be more efficient and better educators.

It is also important to understand where teachers are challenged to find good Treaty Education resources that are student friendly. Valuable information can be gained from speaking to teachers. Through this research, teachers actively engaged in Treaty Education shared their insights into successful practice and challenges that they experience. This information will provide direction to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatchewan school divisions, and both provincial colleges of education in Saskatchewan. From passionate, committed teachers much can be learned about Treaty Education in the province of Saskatchewan.

### **1.3 Rationale and Context**

Saskatchewan is a prairie province with a large geographic area inhabited by a somewhat sparse population of just over one million people (“Saskatchewan,” n.d.). Many residents of Saskatchewan can trace their ancestral roots back to Eastern Europe as their descendants came from pioneer families who settled the province in the late 1800s and early 1900s (“Saskatchewan,” n.d.). Today, only 13.7 percent of Saskatchewan’s population is of Indigenous descent (Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, 2019). Official statistics often under-count Indigenous peoples so this statistic is likely low and may not accurately reflect the total number of Indigenous peoples living in Saskatchewan. When British colonials invaded Turtle Island, known today as Canada, many of the original inhabitants were eventually forced into signing treaties with the British Crown.

Plains Indigenous peoples depended on the bison, but by 1873 the bison had been deliberately slaughtered to undermine the First Nations traditional economy that allowed the Canadian government to control them (Daschuk, 2014). According to Regan (2010), in the



nineteenth century, the Canadian government developed aggressive strategies to pacify Indigenous people while on a quest to transform the prairies into a peaceful agricultural garden (p. 87, 91). Ottawa had disturbing policies towards the protection, or rather lack of protection, of the bison. Regan (2010) contends that:

The dominion government deliberately failed to take action because it was understood that the buffalo hunt was central to the social orders of Plains tribes; the government knew that destroying the buffalo would force the Indians to reserves. (p. 92)

With the economies of First Nations populations in jeopardy, indeed, with the survival under threat, many Indigenous peoples sought Treaty with the federal government (“Treaties with Indigenous Peoples in Canada,” n.d.).

Between 1871 and 1921, 11 numbered treaties were negotiated with the intention of sharing land in present-day Ontario to Alberta, portions of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. These formal agreements were between the Crown and the First Nations and they came with obligations and expectations (“Treaty 4,” n.d.). However, several subsequent government initiatives have stripped Indigenous Peoples of their rights. The Indian Act of 1876, which pertains to only First Nations people, has “enabled trauma, human rights violations and social and cultural disruption for generations of First nations peoples” (“Indian Act,” n.d.). From 1880 to 1996, Indian Residential Schools aimed to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture (“Residential Schools in Canada,” n.d.). In 1979, Duncan Campbell Scott became the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs. He is famously misquoted for having said the goal of residential schools was to “kill the Indian in the child.” He actually stated:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem... our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question. (“Duncan Campbell Scott,” n.d.)

As well, in the 1960s, Indigenous children were taken from their homes in the “Sixties Scoop”. These children were adopted into “predominantly non-Indigenous, middle class families across the United States and Canada” (Sinclair & Dainard, 2016). Years of cultural genocide have had a devastating impact on Indigenous peoples.

The policies of the federal government, with the intended aim to build a national identity, have also played a role in more hidden forms of racism that avoid detection because they are linked to patriotism and nationalism (Mackey, 2002). A common goal of successive federal governments has been to create a national Canadian identity that is seen as embracing multicultural diversity with tolerance and benevolence (Mackey, 2002). In contrast to the United States, which is known as a ‘melting pot’, Canada has gone to great financial cost and effort to build a national identity out of diversity (Mackey, 2002). Evidence of this goal can be seen in the 2015 address by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in London, England:

Canada has learned how to be strong not in spite of our differences, but because of them, and going forward, that capacity will be at the heart of both our success, and what we offer the world. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion isn’t about Canadians being nice and polite — though of course we are. In fact, this commitment is a powerful and ambitious approach to making Canada, and the world, a better, and safer, place. (Government of Canada, 2015, 4th para.)

For many Canadians, being from a country that prides itself on diversity as our strength creates a false sense of pride. Hidden racism bubbles under the surface of this facade.

The government’s approach to creating a national identity that celebrates diversity comes at a cost. As Mackey (2002) states “Indigenous peoples and non-British cultural groups are managed, located, let in, excluded, and made visible or invisible, represented positively or negatively, assimilated or appropriated, depending on the changing needs of nation-building” (p. 127). She maintains that our tolerance is really a series of contradictions to suit the needs of the national image (Mackey, 2002). Having a national identity tied to tolerating diversity allows White Canadians of British ancestors to maintain innocence while seeing themselves as superior and ‘real’ Canadians. Indigenous peoples and non-British immigrants have not been afforded the same status (Mackey, 2002).

It is a common narrative in Canada that settler Canadians cast themselves as peacemakers. Many Canadians wrongly believe that Canada was founded on peace treaties, and that treaties have benefited one group: Indigenous peoples. According to Regan (2010):

Many Canadians still believe that Indigenous peoples have been the fortunate beneficiaries of our altruism, although some historians now question Canada’s bounty and benevolence. They ask us to reconsider ‘which treaty partner has been truly kind and generous.’ (p. 84)

The peacemaker myth hides a pattern of violent behavior and denial of Indigenous history. It has also allowed Canadians to abdicate their responsibility toward rectifying historical injustice.

In Canadian politics an example of Canada's two-tiered status can be seen in former Conservative Party of Canada MP Kelly Leitch's bid for party leadership. She pitched a "controversial plan to screen immigrants for 'anti-Canadian values' [and] ignited national debate about immigration policy and what it was to be Canadian" (Kingston, 2017, 1st para.). The values test was considered to be a 'dog whistle' to White nationalists or 'real' Canadians worried about the "increasing lack of homogeneity as a threat to the 'core culture' (Schick, 2012, p. 5). The proliferation of fear against losing homogeneity and White superiority can be seen in the yellow vest movement that emanated out the prairies and swept across the country in January 2019. One of the core values of the group has been opposition to "Canada's approval of a new [United Nations] UN pact designed to promote cooperation to ensure safe migration between states" (Cecco, 2018, 16th para.). Both of these examples allow us to see that 'real' Canadians are considered to be White.

On November 9th, 2019, Don Cherry ranted on Coach's Corner about immigrants and new Canadians not wearing a poppy to honor Remembrance Day. He never used the word immigrant, but what he said was an example of how the national multicultural identity actually separates and divides "real" Canadians from those who are "othered". He said:

You people that come here... whatever it is, you love our way of life, you love our milk and honey, at least you could pay a couple of bucks for a poppy. (Bensadoun, 2019)

After he refused to apologize for his comments, Sportsnet fired Don Cherry.

Several days after Cherry was fired, a tv talk show host, Jess Allen, made comments on her personal feelings towards White hockey players who had bullied her growing up. She stated that the bullying has caused her to be conflicted about hockey as our national identity (Warmington, 2019). The backlash that she received was prolific, swift, and, at times, vicious. As one person wrote on twitter:

It was disgusting to watch this network air the sickening and racist rant against Canadians today. You should be ashamed of yourselves for giving a national platform to a racist troll like Jess Allen. #FireJessAllen. (Warmington, 2019)

This tweet is a good example of the backlash that Allen received, and also the way that many Canadians do not understand racism. Saying some White hockey players bullied her was seen by many White settlers to be racist. At the same time, the tweet demonstrates that real Canadians are White by saying she made a “racist rant against Canadians” (Warmington, 2019). The backlash Jess Allen faced was extraordinary. White settler mothers were out in full force to defend their son’s, and daughter’s, entitlements. Schick (2012) would contend:

The [backlash] is an act of community cohesion against the threat of difference and loss of community identity. The threat of difference and loss are not from the outside other who is already marked, but from the potential for the community to fail to cohere in its own claim to particular colonizing narratives that constitute their sense of how they understand themselves. (p.5)

In this case, Allen, a White woman, attacked her own from within and failed to maintain the perceived identity of White hockey players. It is important to look at incidents like these from the larger society to understand the pressures that teachers face when attempting to meet the mandate of Treaty Education.

According to Mackey (2005), in 1985 a document was put out by Multiculturalism and Citizenship, a branch of the Canadian government, which promoted multiculturalism as a Band-Aid to heal the nation. The document stated:

Multiculturalism can be seen as a great national bandage to bind over all of the divisions, or a philosophy to help individuals develop a self-concept rooted in their unique past and looking toward a united future. It becomes a way of being able to talk about diversity but not divisiveness, unity but not assimilation. In a society of knowledge sense, it provides a language with which to talk about problems which are seen as threatening to the national fabric. (p. 80)

The national policy on Canadian identity has created a two-tiered society of real Canadians and others. The great Band-Aid of multiculturalism is window dressing that only attempts to mask the forward march of colonization and White supremacy.

Historically power has belonged to educated White men, some of whom were tasked with curriculum development (Orlowski, 2011). The curriculum has been a hegemonic tool as the interests of the privileged group are prioritized. This strategy is done through what is put into the

curriculum and what is excluded. The curriculum is a hegemonic device that utilizes omission as hegemonic strategy. According to Orlowski (2011) power is a “set of social relations built seamlessly into daily relations and practices” (p. 6). Power is nearly invisible as it functions outside of our ability to see and recognize. It acts as a “social regulator in racial, class, and gender relations” (Orlowski, 2011, p. 6). The hidden nature of hegemony makes educating for racial equality difficult.

Educators have an enormous amount of power and influence over their students. We can teach about Treaty Education using the formal curriculum, and we can make that curriculum come alive for our students as we relate it to their own lives. Using life experiences and context to create pedagogy out of the interests and passions of the teacher and the students is the enacted curriculum (Orlowski, 2011). Though the enacted curriculum educators can teach students about the imbalance of power and privilege and how power is used to hold those who are ‘othered’ down.

Under our current education system, many Indigenous youth struggle to graduate from high school or to have the proper skills for employment (St. Denis, 2007). There is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in foster care (Edwards, 2018). In 2017, Federal Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott said, “We are facing a humanitarian crisis in this country where Indigenous children are vastly disproportionately over-represented in the child welfare system” (Barrera, 2017). According to the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (2016), 60 percent of First Nations children on reserve live in poverty. An overwhelming 57.9 percent of First Nations children live in poverty in Saskatchewan (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2013). First Nations people are often blamed for their circumstances and those in positions of dominance are almost never held accountable for on-going discrimination.

According to an article in *The Tyee*, “What If We Gave Struggling Families as Much Support as Foster Parents?,” many Indigenous children are apprehended and placed into the foster care system because of “neglect,” which is often code for poverty. Poverty is a result of ongoing colonization. The article paints a stark picture of systemic racism:

In a system where Indigenous kids are grossly overrepresented due to the ongoing impacts of colonial policies and intergenerational trauma, fully three-quarters of Indigenous kids in care in B.C. were apprehended because of “neglect”. (Hyslop, Morgan, Seucharan, & Sherlock, 2019)

The article questions why more is not being done to alleviate child poverty rates and raises issues around funding within the child welfare system. It points out that much higher rates are spent on helping families who are struggling to live in poverty as a direct result of colonization.

According to Statistics Canada, colonization has had a devastating impact on Indigenous peoples. From family break down, to poverty, loss of language and culture, exposure to abuse, intergenerational trauma, marginalization, and racism, it is no wonder suicide rates are much higher among Indigenous peoples than non-Indigenous peoples (Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019). On the Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation, in Saskatchewan, the situation is dire as three children, one only ten years old, committed suicide in one month, November 2019. The entire community declared a state of crisis.

There should be a sense of urgency felt by all. We cannot take decades to do this difficult work of decolonizing. Governments must act now to fulfill the Treaty promises. Unfortunately, governments are elected by people, and the general population is blind to the ongoing role of colonization. Most Canadians do not call on governments to end the colonial practices or to end child poverty. So, the work of decolonizing falls heavily on the education system. We educate the children of today who will vote in the elections of tomorrow.

The problem is racism is deep rooted in the history of Saskatchewan. In many ways racism functions invisibly, but it continues to oppress and marginalize Indigenous peoples and those who are racially marked. Unfortunately, many educators also hold racist attitudes (Orlowski, 2011); nonetheless, they have been tasked with implementing Treaty Education. It is expected that education will be the way to progress towards a more equal and just society. Treaty Education has been in place for a decade and Indigenous peoples are far from experiencing equality. As educators, it is imperative that we understand where we are at so that we may understand the work that must be done.

## **1.4 Situating Myself**

This study has been a journey for me, a rebirth, and possibly even an awakening. At the start of this project I identified as White settler. My fair skin and blue eyes have always allowed me to walk in the world of White privilege. I knew that I came from Métis heritage, but I had put

up a wall, not allowing more than a surface understanding to permeate my being. Louis Riel famously said, “My people will sleep for 100 years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them back their spirit” (Canadian Museum of History, 2019). Perhaps this project has helped me to awaken.

The story of my family is no different from many Métis families. Many Métis went into hiding, ashamed of their “half-breed” status and afraid for their lives as many Métis died under mysterious circumstances. If families could pass as White, they did, and they turned their backs on their Indigenous roots. My family did attempt to pass as White, turning their backs on our Métis heritage. However, just as Louis Riel prophesized, many Métis are awakening and attempting to understand our history in an effort to reconnect with an identity that was shamed and stolen from us.

Shame is a powerful feeling, and one that I understand well. Shame has been passed forward from my great-great-grandmother, through my mother’s maternal line. It shows itself in my family as deep enduring pain, anxiety, addictions, suicide, and teenage pregnancies. When you don’t feel whole you hide who you really are, and you worry about everything you say and do. Some numb the pain and anxiety with alcohol or drugs. Oxycodone stole my aunt. She could never get numb enough. I have recently come to understand that family trauma is passed forward to each new generation and that time does not heal all wounds. It is not something that you just get over. It is for this reason that I cringe when I hear White settler Canadians demanding that First Nations people “just get over it”—it being colonization which is wrongly thought to be in the past.

In Canada, my lineage can be traced back to the 1600s. My ancestors included French men who came here hundreds of years ago and married Native women. My bloodline traces back to the Touronds, Courchenes, Sansregrets, Laderoutes, and Beauchamps who were members of the first Métis Nation of the Red River. Because some of my ancestors spoke Michif, I assume that their Indigenous ancestry was likely Cree ancestry. My Métis ancestors were gravely impacted by both the Red River Resistance and the Battle of Batoche. My great grandmother’s grandfather was a middleman who helped First Nations people trade with the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) during the fur trade era. As a middleman it was his job to pick up and deliver goods between First Nations peoples and the HBC. My great grandmother’s grandfather travelled

by way of canoe from Red River up into Cumberland House, Meadow Lake, Ille Le Cross, and all over the Northern region while working for the HBC.

My family has three generations of scrip from the Red River settlements. Those scrips were each worth \$160, but they were as useless as the money from a children's board game. Many of my family were not able to use their scrip to purchase land and lived for years on road allowances. Due to so much shame and denial, much of my family's history was not shared. Many Métis had their scrip swindled for amounts that were well below their value. This was due to the fact that many were poor and were not in a position where they could afford to move to purchase new land. Some Metis were discriminated against and could not sell their script.

My grandmother's grandmother had a brother and a brother-in-law who were arrested with Louis Riel when he was tried for treason and hanged in 1885. Riel wrote a prayer for those Tourond family members. After the Resistance was lost, my family fled to the United States for several years. This entire generation of my family lost in the battle of Batoche resulted in so much shame that they began denying their ancestry.

My grandmother's grandfather, John Francis Xavier Dolan, was from somewhere in the United States. It was a family rumor that he was Native American. He denied this until the day he died. He had no familial ties and forbade his family from ever looking into his past or trying to contact his family. Too much time has gone by, and the records do not exist to confirm or deny this family rumor.

The Métis heritage was not something that was ever outright denied and hidden, although it was not talked about or celebrated either. However, the fact that my great-great grandfather, John Francis Xavier Dolan, was an "Indian" was outright denied. This was considered shameful and kept as if it were a dirty secret. I had great uncles who looked First Nations, but who denied it. I have a great uncle who decided to name all of his children with an O in their middle name so that their last name, Dolan, would sound more Irish. When my grandmother was in her eighties, she confided in my youngest sister about what it was like to grow up a "half-breed." In school, my grandmother was bullied and called a "dirty Indian". Her siblings were too, especially the ones with darker skin tones.

If you could pass as White, you did. I can't say that I can blame them. My family was caught between two worlds — not accepted as White, and not accepted as First Nations.



However, passing as White was much safer than being thought to be “Indian”. I knew from a very young age that I was lucky to have light colored skin. I do not remember who told me this, but I do remember being made to feel lucky and that my life would be easier.

My grandmother was not a good mother, by her own admission, and her children would agree. However, she was a wonderful grandmother to me, and she tried to protect me from the same painful upbringing that she bestowed upon my mother. My mother was a teenage mother, and I followed in her footsteps. My mother is ashamed of who she is, and she passed that shame along to me and my siblings. Shame is a powerful force and it traps you and keeps you from reaching your true potential. I know this from first-hand experience.

Learning about my past has been a roller coaster of emotions for me. I feel the shame more acutely, but I also feel the anger at what was stolen from my family. It is not just anger for the stolen land, but the deep anger is for the stolen pride. I feel anger that the past has had such a profound impact on the generations that came after. I also feel hope. I feel hopeful that there can be healing in the reconnecting and acceptance. I feel hope that I can spare my own children from this shame and instill in them a sense of pride.

I was raised in a middle-class home during the late 1970s through to the early 1990s in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Prince Albert is the third largest urban city in Saskatchewan which had a population of 35 102 during the 2016 Canadian Census (Statistics Canada, 2018). The city is also home to the Saskatchewan Federal Penitentiary. As a young person my perception was that many residents of the city viewed the penitentiary as being filled with ‘lawless Indians,’ who stayed around the city once they were released. While this is a stereotype, Indigenous adults are overrepresented in admission to provincial and territorial correctional services. In 2016, Indigenous adults accounted for 26 percent of correctional admissions while representing only 3 percent of the Canadian adult population (Reitano, 2018). It has become my belief that the penitentiary is one factor that makes racism slightly easier to perceive in Prince Albert over Saskatoon. Growing up in Prince Albert, I perceived racism as just a part of everyday life. Blaming “Indians” for their situation and rank in society was the norm for many non-Indigenous peoples. No one seemed to question power and privilege, and no one seemed to consider the impact history had on Indigenous peoples. No one seemed to recognize the poverty, brought on

by a hundred years of colonization, which resulted in the taking of thousands of Indigenous children into the foster care system.

I was the second person in my family to ever attend university, and one of four people to ever receive a degree. I have been an elementary school teacher in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for twenty years. Prior to working for the separate school system in Saskatoon, my first two years of teaching were in my hometown of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. During my entire educational career, I have taught mainly students with a Euro Canadian settler background from working-class and middle-class families. The greater part of my teaching experience has been educating students between grades five to eight.

About ten years ago, I opted to participate in professional development within my school division to be a Treaty catalyst teacher. The intention of my school division in creating Treaty catalyst teacher positions was to support educators in finding meaningful ways to infuse Indigenous content into their teaching practice. For me, this professional development was the catalyst for the unpacking my own Eurocentric educational views.

I have undertaken small and large Treaty Education projects since becoming a Treaty catalyst teacher. In the 2012/2013 school year, I applied for a TreatySmarts grant from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. My school received the grant and the grades 4 to 8 teachers and students all learned about Treaty Education. Students learned our true colonial history and then worked with spoken word artists to create spoken word poems that they would perform for their parents at a large slam poetry night that we put on at the Broadway Theatre. The poems were amazing and heart wrenching. The students were thrilled with their performances. I naively thought that we would share the true history of Canada with parents and they would be shocked and horrified, but thankful for the opportunity to learn from their children. I was wrong. Many parents were upset, and they contacted my administrator to complain. I had unwittingly offered parents a counter hegemonic narrative and they resisted, and I encountered backlash.

The following school year I applied for an ArtsSmarts grant also from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. This time the project was a celebration of cultural diversity. We put on a night of dance, spoken word poetry, and song, all of which celebrated the beauty of other cultures. This night went over much more smoothly, and parents remarked that it was much more uplifting, and

hope filled than the year before. Again, unknowingly, I played into Canada's long held beliefs of Canada being a nation that celebrates and appreciates diversity.

In the 2016/2017 school year I found myself in a new position teaching grades 2-6 social studies. While attempting to cover the Treaty Education outcomes I became keenly aware of the lack of ready to use resources for primary students. For example the grade 4 social studies curriculum asks students to investigate Indigenous historic figures of Saskatchewan. It was difficult to find resources that students could read and understand. I decided to apply for another grant from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. Together, my students, and Saskatoon artist Kevin Pee-Ace and I went about creating student friendly digital books on Big Bear, Poundmaker, and Almighty Voice.

I share these teaching experiences to make explicit my bias as a researcher. I come to this research with a bias about the resources that have been made available to teachers. I do not feel that Treaty Education has been properly resourced. I also have biases about how parents respond to Treaty Education. I believe that done correctly, Treaty Education will be met with resistance from white settler parents. I also believe that teachers need the backing of an administrator to be able to do this difficult work.

Three years ago, I began a journey to complete a master's degree in the Department of Educational Foundations with a specific focus on critical environmental education. I never could have predicted that this journey would be transformative—that it would send me digging into my past to try to understand the present. My thesis has allowed me the opportunity to consider the two worlds that I straddle. I am an Indigenous person walking with a blanket of White skin in a White-settler world. I want my work to bring about positive change.

I think about my own children and my students and I try to imagine what their future could be. I think about all of the generations of Indigenous peoples who have undergone cultural genocide and have not been able to hide under a blanket of White skin. I think about their deep enduring pain and the shame they've been forced to have for who they are. It makes me cry because this is pain that I can recognize. I have no doubt that having my White skin has protected me in a thousand ways, and that my understanding only covers the surface of what many First Nations people have been through. However, it is with the reclamation of my Indigenous heritage, and knowledge of the history of colonization that I am resolved to make a difference in

the lives of my students. I am hopeful that my research will have legs and it will help forge a path forward. The goal of Treaty Education is to bring about equality for Indigenous peoples. It has not succeeded, yet. I hope that my study and its recommendations can get us closer to the intended goal.

The history of my family allows me to straddle the center space between White settler Canadians and First Nations peoples. It is true that I do not face racism, but I do have an understanding of the true history of Canada and what has been taken from Indigenous peoples. I can stand in the space between these two worlds and try to help bridge the gap. I can access my White privilege to have a voice and advocate for better supports for Treaty Education. I will advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive education in Saskatchewan. As an Indigenous person and ally, I can educate others and help them to come to understand Canada's true history and the ongoing effects of colonization. I can work alongside others doing the work of decolonization. While I have learned much, I recognize that I still have much to learn and I remain humble and open to that learning.

## **1.5 Summary**

In summary, Treaty Education has been in place in Saskatchewan for just over a decade. It was developed under the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party (NDP) government and rolled out by the Saskatchewan Party government in 2008. The purpose of Treaty Education is to bring forth a counter hegemonic narrative of how Canada was settled. The true history of colonization has historically been hidden from Canadians. The federal government has worked to create Canada's national identity as one of tolerance and benevolence towards diversity. The truth is that the national identity has allowed many White settler Canadians to stay blind to racism. In fact, curriculum has been used as a hegemonic tool to protect the interests of White settlers. Power, and who holds power, has been largely invisible and the nature of hegemony has made it difficult to educate for racial equality. Racism is a normal part of Saskatchewan as it mostly functions invisibly. However, the consequences to racism come at a heavy price for First Nations people as they suffer under staggering rates of poverty and over representation in the justice system as well as the foster care system. We need to understand the history of Canada, and our current context, as well as learn to see the various forms of power that continue to marginalize

and oppress Indigenous people. As educators, we have only just begun the process of Treaty Education. It is time to take stock of where we are so that we can recalibrate our path forward.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In this review of the literature I will describe how racism functions including forms of racism, hegemony and curriculum, White innocence, White-settler resentment and resistance, and ignorance as resistance. I will also examine the debate between non-critical forms of multiculturalism and anti-racist education. I will touch briefly on how schools are marked as White spaces. As well, I will also review how professional development can be an effective tool for increasing cultural competency. As well, I will touch on reframing the Indigenous educational gap as an educational debt that is owed to Indigenous students in Saskatchewan. I will also provide an overview of programs currently taking place within Saskatchewan to give context to the experiences and views of research participants.

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The lens through which I see the world comes from a critical theory perspective. Critical theory can be “considered to be a critique of modernity and the developments and institutions associated with modern society” (Calhoun, 2003, p. 504). Critical theorists tend to have a comprehensive social theory that the world can be a better place (Calhoun, 2003). Through a critique of capitalism, critical theorists look for ways that humans are exploited in the name of progress (Calhoun, 2003). My study specifically examines Treaty Education in Saskatchewan. One of the major goals of Treaty Education is to educate youth on the historic and ongoing forms of colonization of Indigenous people within Canada. Having a critical theory perspective allows me to critique the systems that continue to marginalize and oppress Indigenous people. Through this lens I can also look for ways that the education system, and educators themselves, can help bring about positive social change for Indigenous people. Critical theory will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

### **2.3 Racism on the Canadian Prairies**

In 2004 the NDP Government of Saskatchewan unveiled SchoolPLUS, a program “committed to providing quality learning opportunities and benefits for *every* young person” (Saskatchewan Government, 2004). According to literature put out by Saskatchewan Government (2004) the aim of the program was to help students actualize their potential and

become committed citizens regardless of the challenges they may have experienced. The stated objectives of the program were to change delivery modes and tailor learning to individual students in order to meet the diverse needs of young people. In 2004 a document created by the Saskatchewan NDP government stated:

Today, significant numbers of young people are experiencing barriers to learning and school success due to social, economic, psychological, and developmental factors in their lives. Realities such as family instability, poverty, racism, and discrimination, and adolescent parenthood have a significant impact on their healthy development and ability to succeed in school, as well as on their future life choices and opportunities.  
(Saskatchewan Government, p. 5)

The program also sought to enhance learning for all students and set targets for reading, writing, and arithmetic with the additional aim of increasing youth engagement. According to Regnier (2012), SchoolPLUS saw the integration of government agencies including justice, health services, and social services, and an increase in community based and business partnerships within schools. In 2007 the more conservative Saskatchewan Party came to power and many of the policy initiatives that came directly from SchoolsPLUS ceased to exist (Regnier, 2013).

Through SchoolsPLUS, Saskatchewan had an education policy that acknowledged racism and discrimination were factors that limited the success of young people. Under the conservative ideology of the Saskatchewan Party, that policy quietly disappeared. In fact, racism is a taboo word within the school system. Dei contends that “silencing talk of racism is essential to its operation, which poses an enormous challenge for anti-racist education, as it asks learners not only to accept that racism exists, but to examine how their own identities are privileged or marginalized by the system of oppression” (cited in Gebhard, 2017, p. 14). Lund (2010) challenges the pervasive idea that Canada has always been a country based on peace and harmony. He argues, “for various reasons, such negative aspects of Canadian history have been excluded or downplayed in current school curriculum and by politicians and administrators” (p. 266). Mackey (2002) would agree and add that the erasure of our colonial past and the creation of a peaceful history work to create White innocence and function to hold those who are ‘othered’ down. According to Tupper (2012) Canada’s historical consciousness regarding colonization include notions that First Nations people are lazy, too dependent on government handouts, incapable of taking care of themselves and their affairs, and that they have brought their problems

on themselves. Tupper (2008) maintains that Treaty Education is a powerful way to counter the historical omissions that have been used as a hegemonic strategy.

## **2.4 Multicultural and Anti-Racist Pedagogy**

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg, cited in Orlowski (2011), there are five different forms of multiculturalism. The first, monoculturalism is a conservative ideology that promotes a return to a mythic period of one common culture. In Canada, assimilation into the dominant culture is carried out through a Eurocentric curriculum. This dominant culture is often of Judeo-Christian Hellenic heritage and espouses family values and excellence. Often family values are social codes for social class, race and give reasons for continued oppression of those who are othered.

The second form is liberal multiculturalism that glorifies neutrality. It is based on the premise that all people come from a common humanity regardless of social class, race, and gender. Surface culture, like dance and food are celebrated, past struggles and racism are not accounted for. It is thought that everybody has the same opportunities for success, which is another hegemonic device.

The third, pluralist multiculturalism, emphasizes difference over sameness. This type of multiculturalism also ignores history and different forms of oppression. It is firmly entrenched in meritocracy— everyone can succeed if they just work hard enough. Differences are highlighted and celebrated with the expectation that everyone should get along. This form has been the most popular recently as society celebrates diversity and supports the notion of individualism.

The fourth, left-essentialist multiculturalism, focuses on the strengths of marginalized groups. Marginalized groups are thought to have the moral high ground and their perspective is thought to be more accurate than the dominant group. While this form of multiculturalism does recognize aspects of race it tends to exaggerate the positive attributes over the negative in marginalized groups.

The fifth and final form of multiculturalism is critical multiculturalism, which is a form of the critical left political ideology. Power shapes political opinions, racial self-images, class, and gendered positions, and it is through an examination of those power structures that people can begin to comprehend how they shape society. This form of multiculturalism differs from the



others because it involves recognizing how class plays a role. It is also grounded in the belief that teaching is political. Regan (2010) states that “the hegemonic structures and practices within bureaucratic systems, and the unequal power relations that define colonial violence, remain for the most part, invisible to non-Native people” (p. 86). Regan (2010) also contends that “failure to understand the historical and contemporary roots of settler attitudes and actions towards Indigenous people” (p. 87) will make reconciliation meaningless. To put this another way, reconciliation will be another meaningless gesture unless we begin to examine how power structures have shaped Canadian society and settler relations with Indigenous people. Critical multiculturalism could be an important tool in decolonization of the classroom.

According to Lund (2010), in academic circles there is a debate between teaching with a multicultural perspective<sup>1</sup> (MC) or an anti-racist (AR) perspective. In his analysis he does not refer to the different forms of multiculturalism but uses the term in a general and broad manner. He explains that MC education is criticized because it does not address hidden forms of racism and oppression. He further adds that MC programs support assimilation and foster ethnic stereotyping by failing to address racism and discrimination. Citing the province of Alberta as an example, Lund (2010) explains the current backlash in Canada against any form of AR or MC education. He points out that “conservative reforms to public policy have led to the elimination or downsizing of several programs related to social justice” (Lund, 2010, p. 267). Political ideology has grave implications for society in general; and for education in particular.

Conservative backlash against teaching for social justice can be seen in Saskatchewan as well. In 2017, Minister of Education for the Saskatchewan Party, Bronwyn Eyre, gave a speech in the legislature where she openly questioned her grade 8 son’s experience with Treaty Education. She openly complained about the ‘wholesale infusion’ of Indigenous history in the curriculum. She questioned if it would be better to have Treaty Education offered as one high school class. She was upset that the romantic notions of her hard-working pioneer grandparents were called into question when her son was taught that “European settlers were colonists,

<sup>1</sup> In the United States, critical multiculturalism is synonymous with anti-racism.

pillagers of the land who knew only buying and selling and didn't respect mother Earth<sup>2</sup>“ (Graham, 2017, 4th para.). In her role as education minister she had tremendous influence over what is included or excluded in the curriculum. This is just one example of how White power and dominance is maintained through education as it speaks to the preference for a Eurocentric curriculum and a multicultural approach.

Historically, Indigenous peoples have been blamed for their own failures and low graduation rates (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). The intention of residential schools was apparently to assimilate Indigenous students into the dominant White society, and in the process forced the loss of Indigenous cultures.

Prior to residential schools, it was believed that Indigenous students had too much culture, and residential schools were believed to be the solution. Since their closure, Indigenous failure has been blamed on students not having enough culture. According to St. Denis (2007) cultural revitalization was seen to be the solution to the problem of systemic social inequality. However, “cultural revitalization is only part of the solution, and ironically, as a solution, it also contributes to other problem as cultural revitalization places the burden of change on Indigenous peoples, yet again” (p. 1080). This is the problem with a liberal multicultural approach; it is apolitical. On its own, more Indigenous cultures is not the solution to racism and the effects of ongoing colonization.

St. Denis (2007) argues a strong case for an anti-racist approach to education, which she believes will allow educators to explore the racialization of Indigenous peoples. Blaming Indigenous peoples for the failures that have resulted from colonization has created a cultural hierarchy of “real,” “traditional,” and “assimilated” Indians. This cultural hierarchy pits Indigenous peoples against each other at the cost of losing focus of the common goal, which is challenging the marginalization that Indigenous peoples face. St. Denis (2007) says, “Proceeding

<sup>2</sup> The assignment that Eyre's referenced asked students to discuss the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives on the land. A petition was started that sought the removal of Eyre as Education Minister. In a subsequent cabinet shuffle Eyre was removed from the position (Macpherson, 2017).

without addressing the impact of racism in education on Indigenous peoples is no longer acceptable” (p. 1081).

Through her own research, and in speaking with Indigenous educators, St. Denis explores how some Indigenous people are able to pass as White. She points out that “passing is an effort to avoid the effects of racism” (St. Denis, 2007, p. 1082). She adds that Indigenous educators are keenly aware that the more Indigenous they look, the more racism they face. She furthers her point by stating that passing is an example of the need to have an anti-racist approach to education. St. Denis (2007) states:

[I]ncorporating cultural traditions and practices into schools as well as developing culturally relevant curriculum content for all subject area has had a positive impact in education, both in Canada as well as in the United States. But, what these interventions do not adequately address is the racism that our youth face on a daily basis. (p.1083)

She adds that the current initiatives do not challenge people’s deeply entrenched and toxic views of Indigenous peoples. For Indigenous peoples, challenging these long held racist views is exhausting, time consuming, and often ineffective.

St. Denis adds that it is imperative that racism be viewed as a contributing factor for low Indigenous graduation rates. St. Denis cites Deyhle (1998) to illustrate this point:

Indian students are often portrayed as suffering from low self-esteem and low self-worth, but racism does limit the educational and economic opportunities of Indian youth and their communities ‘this is a reality they live with daily, to ignore this is to place responsibility on the individual for identity problems or low self-worth, alienation, and helplessness’. (p. 1084)

St. Denis contends that non-Indigenous and Indigenous teachers and administrators need to learn about racism and how the belief in White superiority shapes all members of society. To hope that a focus on the positives of Indigenous culture will disrupt racial superiority is misguided. Everyone can benefit from anti-racist education.

Infusing the curriculum with Treaty Education without an AR approach may actually do more harm than good. Gebhard (2017) urges educators to “rethink the integration of Indigenous culture in schools as a singular pathway to student success, and the importance of foregrounding race and racism” (p. 10). She interviewed teachers in Saskatchewan and analyzed their statements through discourse analysis. She provides specific examples of how cultural discourses silence the

discussion on how and why race matters within the school system and “(re)produces Indigenous students as inferior” (Gebhard, p. 4). The educators in her study were reluctant to consider how racism functions within a school setting and employed “rhetorical maneuvers to evade talk of racism” (Gebhard, 2017, p. 12). Gebhard (2017) gives several examples of different narratives used to maintain White innocence and to blame Indigenous peoples for their circumstances. These examples included residential schools — seen to be in the past and perhaps even a positive experience. An example of this sentiment can be seen in the words of Conservative Senator Lynn Beyak who stated, “if you go across Canada, there are shining examples from sea to sea of people who owe their lives to the schools” (Tasker, 2017). While there are some examples of Indigenous people who feel they had a positive experience in residential school, overwhelmingly more would agree that residential schools were a damaging experience. Her words certainly have a lot to unpack, but the notion that residential schools were good for some Indigenous peoples is clear.

In contrast, residential schools were also used as evidence of Indigenous peoples being too damaged to succeed in school. Educators also used narratives claiming that Indigenous parents do not value education which explains low Indigenous success rates (Gebhard, 2017). These are all examples of the cultural-deficit discourse.

It is not surprising that educators are reluctant to consider how racism impacts racial minorities and those who are “othered”, especially Indigenous students. As Mackey (2010) makes clear, racism functions in ways that are difficult to see and perceive. Gebhard (2017) cites Sinclair who succinctly stated that “the residential school system has taught non-Indigenous peoples to view Indigenous peoples as inferior...” (p. 23). As a result, White settlers blame Indigenous peoples for their circumstances without considering how racism currently functions to maintain White supremacy. Teaching Treaty Education without the context of power, privilege and racism produces more narratives of White innocence and the damaged “Indian”. Gebhard (2017) supports this notion when she states that “educators should be encouraged to teach about multiculturalism, but not to the exclusion of anti-racism. It is imperative that teachers also focus on race and privilege as “anti-racism and cultural revitalization initiatives are not mutually exclusive” (p. 14). It is impossible to remove racism from society if it cannot be seen by those in positions of power.

Kowaluk (2016) makes a strong case for creating culturally responsive classrooms, through multicultural education when she states:

Multicultural education is a progressive approach that can transform education by holistically assessing and addressing current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in morals of social justice, educational parity, and a dedication to facilitating the educational experience where all students can reach their full potential. Multicultural education recognizes that schools are essential in laying the foundation to elicit change in societal thinking and to assist the elimination of oppression and injustice. (p. 55)

A multicultural approach sounds wonderful and many educators drawn to social justice issues will no doubt be taken with it. It allows teachers to feel good about helping students to celebrate cultural diversity. St. Denis (2011) contends that “multiculturalism helps to erase, diminish, trivialize, and deflect from acknowledging Aboriginal sovereignty and the need to redress Aboriginal rights” (p. 309). It is for this very reason, that on its own, multiculturalism cannot further Treaty Education and Indigenous rights.

Kowaluk (2016) explains that Canada is becoming a lot more diverse due to current immigration policies. As well, “people who are part of the mainstream in Canada run the risk of not understanding the intricacies of other cultures because they do not recognize that they have their own culture” (Kowaluk, 2016, p. 56). She calls on mainstream Canadians to recognize their own culture and how it shapes their beliefs. She also states that understanding one’s own culture helps to develop pride and a willingness to learn about other diverse cultures. According to Ladson-Billings (1999), this approach is problematic because:

the race-neutral or color-blind perspective, evident in the way the curriculum presents people of color, presumes a homogenized “we” in a celebration of diversity. Thus, students are erroneously taught “we are all immigrants” and African American, Indigenous, Chicano students are left with the guilt of failing to rise above their immigrant status like “every other group.” (p. 22)

In other words, a multicultural approach ignores the role that race plays in who is elevated and who is shut out. Ladson-Billings (1999) cites Morrison to illustrate this point:

Race has become metaphorical— a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological “race” ever was. (p. 80)

It seems to me that when Kowaluk refers to “mainstream” Canadians, she means White-settler Canadians.

Calling on White-settler Canadians to become more connected to their culture, so that they can have cultural pride will not work to create a more just and equal society. St. Denis (2011) argues this point when she identifies the shortcomings of a multicultural approach:

First multiculturalism encourages social divisions in that it “separates, intensifies misunderstanding and hostility, and pits one group against another in the competition for power and resources” (Fleras & Elliott 1992, p. 132). Next, multiculturalism is regressive because it is “derelict in combating social inequality” (Fleras and Elliott, 1992, p. 134). Third, multiculturalism permits a form of participation on the part of those designated as “cultural others” that is limited to the decorative and includes “leisure, entertainment, food, song, and dance” (Fleras & Elliot, 1992, p. 136). Finally, multiculturalism is “impractical” and inadequate” for “sorting out the conflicting claims of individuals, minority groups, vested interests and a centralized state” (Fleras & Elliot, p. 140). These four assertions begin to identify the ways in which multicultural policies and practices prevent an anti-colonial analysis. (p. 308)

To go even further, St. Denis (2011) explains that for racialized immigrants, multiculturalism does not address racism and anti-immigrant views, but might actually make them worse (p.308). For Indigenous groups, a multicultural approach can actually be a form of colonization as it distracts from issues of Indigenous rights and a history of colonization.

Citing the work of Légaré (1995), Mackey (2005), and Short (2005), St. Denis (2011) contends that, “multiculturalism helps erase, diminish, trivialize, and deflect from acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty and the need to redress Indigenous rights” (p. 309). It is very easy to get caught up in the feel-good approach that multiculturalism offers teachers, but the goal of Treaty Education should be to create a just society. By taking on a purely multicultural approach, education will not address the ongoing impacts of racism and colonization.

## **2.5 Schools are White Spaces**

Considering how racism impacts Indigenous students in schools is an important part of decolonizing our education system. People emotionally identify with the spaces they occupy. However, spaces are “marked through race, gender, class, and other social constructions” (Schick, 2012, p. 4). Schick contends that schools are marked as White spaces through the

histories teachers chose to include and exclude. Spaces are also shaped in ways that let students know who belongs in that space and who does not belong.

In her thesis, Kreuger (2016) argues that schools are a form of violence on Indigenous children. She explains that residential schools were the first form of violence. She uses the work of Galtung to illustrate her point, explaining that there are six dimensions to violence. Residential schools were both personal and structural in their violence. They were personal in that people were committing violence, and structural as violence was invisibly built into the social structure of Canada by denying Indigenous peoples their potential. She explains that although “the personal violence is over, the institutions closed, the perpetrators dead, or no longer in power, the structural violence that created the system, remains” (Kreuger, 2016, p. 2). Indigenous children are not reaching their potential in the Saskatchewan school system because the structural violence remains. White settler educators must consider how schools are marked as White. They must be challenged to consider how their teaching practice could actually hold Indigenous students outside of the system.

## **2.6 White Resentment and Resistance**

Participants engaged in Treaty Education sometimes come up against passive and active resistance toward the inclusion of Indigenous history. According to Schick (2012) White privilege and White supremacy rely on a politically and economically constructed system of race identification [for White settlers] to understand themselves (p. 2). When a seemingly benign version of history is shared it can be met with overt and passive forms of resistance, especially when those versions of history do not play into how White settlers have come to understand themselves and their ancestors — as hardworking people who came here and broke the land (Schick, 2012). Schick (2016) states:

Romantic and heroic tales of the many challenges met and faced by homesteaders renders White settlers as innocent and removed from the effects of colonization experienced by the indigenous [sic] other, the creation of indigenous [sic] stereotypes notwithstanding. (p.6)

Schick (2012) explains that resentment is an important theme for organizing whiteness. Whiteness is non-existent, empty, socially constructed, innocent, and reliant on the refusal of acknowledgment. Resentment is not just towards Treaty Education in some schools, but rather

the larger change of economic, social, and cultural factors. Treaty Education triggers resentment because it causes anxiety over the disruption of how whiteness culturally and socially identifies. When teachers face White resentment and resistance for covering Treaty Education content, they are facing backlash that is easily felt, but not easily named or understood.

To illustrate White resentment and resistance Schick (2012) references research completed with principals at the Canadian Association of Principals Annual Conference in 2010. Principals indicated that their job was made difficult by racism in their own communities (Schick, 2012). Schick (2012) explores White resentment in settler society explaining that “there is a sense of impunity that allows White settlers to remove students from the classroom” (p. 5). She illustrates this statement by sharing the story of 70+ participants, 60 of whom walked out of school on a day where the focus was to be learning from The Treaty Resource Kit (Schick, 2012). She further adds that “these are not individual emotional responses, but ones that are collectively organized and understood in ways that exhibit various formations of White racial identity, that include entitlement, superiority, and belonging” (Schick, 2012, p. 5).

Schick (2012) also points out that the “discussion about rising indigenous [sic] birthrates in Canada, especially on the prairies, is frequently cited as one we should be alarmed [about] and ‘prepared’ [for]” (p. 6). Resisting Treaty Education serves as a function to uphold White supremacy while simultaneously “reinforcing White privilege as a naturalized entitlement” (Schick, 2012, p. 13). As referred to earlier, conservative politicians Bronwyn Eyre and Kellie Leitch are examples of White resentment and resistance in people who hold the power to make curriculum decisions and government policies.

## **2.7 Ignorance as Resistance**

White settler ignorance on issues of race, power, and privilege can be seen as a form of ignorance as resistance. People cannot change what they don’t know, and so as White settlers, power can be maintained by being blind to power and racism. Garrett and Segall (2013) set out to understand the forms of resistance taken by White preservice teachers. They explain that educators make three assumptions:

- 1.) That White students are ignorant of race issues;
- 2.) The role of education is the savior - and that education can reduce students’ ignorance;



3.) That such ignorance can be fixed with more knowledge.

Through their work they contend that instead of seeing these struggles as a problem, we embrace them as opportunities to learn. As part of the process of learning about power, privilege, and resistance, White learners will feel resistant. It is not just that they are resisting the learning, but actually the resistance is part of the learning process. They propose that teachers learn how to help students with the feelings that are experienced while undertaking this kind of work.

To illustrate this concept, Garrett and Segall (2013) state:

Resistance points us to a problematic situation for the learner who, as Pitt explains, is implicated and therefore discomforted by the discussion, the lecture, or the question. Resistance, in this case, is not an effort to prevent the learner from learning, it is rather what “students do after they have learned something”. (p. 298)

They explain that resistance is “a strategic compromise” to keep discussion at a level that is tolerable, and it is imperative that even though White-settler students are implicated in their raced positions, they are not solely responsible (Garrett & Segall, 2013). Rather than focus on the resistance as something that needs more information, teachers are challenged to focus on the feelings that led to the resistance. Garrett and Segall (2013) suggest asking students questions like, “What was it that first made us feel more emotionally heightened? What was it that first made us say ‘no’?” (p. 301). Maintaining ignorance over issues of race, privilege and power is one form of resistance. Learning how to turn the resistance into continued learning will be key.

## **2.8 Hegemony and Racial Discourse**

Racism functions in hidden ways to entrench or destabilize the dominant view toward people of color (Orlowski, 2011). Using Frankenberg’s (1993) taxonomy, Orlowski (2011) explains that there are three racial discourses that function to maintain hegemony around race relations. The three discourses are essentialist, color-blind, and race-cognizance.

The essentialist discourse rationalized the racial hierarchies that, in turn, justified European empires. Europeans saw themselves as superior and at the top of a racial hierarchy. All other races were seen to fall under White Europeans, and this continued into North America as the British colonized the land of Indigenous peoples. White superiority was the norm and justified the theft of Indigenous land and the enslavement of African people (Orlowski, 2011).

Another racial discourse at work is color-blind. According to Orlowski (2011) “its major tenet is that beneath the skin, everyone is equal” (p. 87). Along with meritocracy, the color-blind discourse functions to blame failure on the individual due to an apparent lack of skill, work ethic, or both (Orlowski, 2011). Skin color plays a role in how people are seen and judged. The color-blind discourse diminishes the many ways that people of color are negatively impacted simply due to the color of their skin. It functions as a way to blame the oppressed while the oppressor remains innocent in their racism. A simple term for this discourse may be “power-blind”.

Race-cognizance discourse emerged in the 1980s out of feminist debates and is a reaction to the dominant discourses of essentialism and color-blindness (Orlowski, 2011). Inequities are rooted in racism, sexism, and poverty (Orlowski, 2011). These power inequities are difficult to see and perceive. A current term used to describe power inequalities that are hidden, but function to hold people of color down is the “glass ceiling”. Race-cognizance functions to oppress people based on their race, class, and gender while upholding White privilege.

Hegemony is also maintained through settler ignorance of colonization. Ignorance of our colonial past can be framed by the term ‘colonial blind’. This term was originally coined by Calderon and cited in the work of Smith (2014). Used as a play on the word color-blind, colonial blind refers to the pervasive lack of understanding settlers have of Canada’s colonial past. Calderon, cited in Smith (2014), explains:

Colonial blind discourses have a much longer history of institutionalization... [that] can be traced back to the colonial origins of European expansion and the nation-building process... it is harder for many to ‘see’ or acknowledge that they are engaging in these types of discourses as they have been normalized for so long. (p. 7)

Educators, who are tasked with Treaty Education, are not immune to being colonial blind. Many teachers were educated in a system designed to hide our true colonial history.

## **2.9 Racism and Schooling**

One of the many ways that Canada maintains colonial blindness is through curriculum. Formal curriculum establishes what is to be taught and reflects the goals and values of a society. The provincial government for each province is responsible for the creation of curriculum. Essentially, governments control what students are expected to formally learn. One of the many examples of how this is accomplished can be seen in the work of Tupper and Cappello (2008),

who point out that courses such as Native Studies exist as a stand-alone course. Citing Furniss they argue that:

It is significant ... that such challenges to the dominant nationalist histories are being introduced on the fringes of the educational system: in supplementary curriculum rather than in official textbooks and in elective courses rather than required courses. (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 561)

Furthering the point, “the role of schools has helped to ensure that Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies are never part of the mainstream narrative” (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 562). Amongst educators there is a perception that Native Studies need only be offered as a choice if there are a significant number of Indigenous students in attendance (Tupper & Cappello, 2008). A balanced approach to history is thought to be necessary only when educating Indigenous students.

The government, and by extension, the school system, is complicit in the fact that many Canadians are unaware of our complicated and brutal history of colonization, and this has been intentional. This notion is supported by Tupper and Cappello (2008) when they state, “one of the overt, historic functions of curriculum, then, was to induct students into a particular, largely homogeneous, culture, as schools carried out the socializing function of their mandate” (p. 566). Educators, who are tasked with Treaty Education, are not immune to being colonial blind. Many teachers were educated in a system designed to hide our true colonial history.

To understand how racism functions in our school systems, it is important to understand the many types of racism. According to Orlowski (2011) there are four different forms of racism “that over time evolve from one form into another” (p. 79). Overt racism is the easiest to see and perceive because it involves a highly personal attack on an individual seen as inferior because of their culture or biology (Orlowski, 2011). Covert racism is more hidden as individuals attempt to deliberately or unconsciously hide their own racist attitudes (Orlowski, 2011). Institutional racism is racist laws enacted against racial or cultural groups. An example of this is the Indian Act. Systemic racism is another insidious form of racism as it is the racist attitudes that affect social relations that last long after a racist law has been removed (Orlowski, 2011).

Curriculum in Saskatchewan historically omitted Indigenous history, and when Indigenous history was included, it was offered in elective classes. Aveling (2007) believes

omitting Indigenous history can be seen as a form of institutional racism. She states, “it is much more difficult to acknowledge that acts of omissions ... might also be classified as a specific form of institutional racism. Through the omission of Indigenous history, institutional racism is hard to see and recognize, and it is “frequently unintentional because the structures and processes that give rise to institutional racism have been so naturalized that they defy interrogation” (Aveling, 2007, p. 70). There is a difference between individual and institutional racism, as is explained by Aveling (2007) when she cites Hollingsworth who states:

Individual racism refers to the expression of racist attitudes and behaviors of individuals in face-to-face situations, and institutional racism refers to complex structures and processes... which function to maintain racial inequality. (p. 70).

In Aveling’s work around institutional racism within the school systems in Australia, she interviewed primary and secondary principals to gain a sense of how the implementation of an anti-racism policy was being taken up by schools. She found that many principals did not have the ability to perceive institutional racism and therefore did not see it as a problem. Aveling (2007) cites Ryan when he says, “administrators simply could not see racism... because of the narrow way in which they view racism” (p. 79). The combination of colorblindness and colonial blindness create a situation where White administrators and educators are unable to perceive institutional racism. This is the same for systemic racism. The legacies of longstanding racist laws still have influence over social relations today (Orlowski, 2011), and many educators and administrators simply cannot understand the power of systemic racism. Simply put, systemic racism can be seen in the way we set low expectations for students using cultural deficit discourse to explain the lack of success.

## **2.10 Teacher Professional Development**

There is much evidence to support the idea that when teachers have ongoing meaningful professional learning opportunities, students are more successful (Papp & Cottrell, 2020). Teacher professional learning<sup>3</sup> is a complex process that requires a cognitive and emotional investment by individual teachers and the teaching collective (Papp & Cottrell, 2020). According

<sup>3</sup> Professional learning has historically been known as professional development, Pro-D, or PD (Papp & Cottrell, 2020). For the purpose of this study I will use the terms interchangeably.

to Darling-Hammond et al. as cited in Papp and Cottrell (2020), there are seven features of effective professional development:

- Is content focused
- Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
- Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
- Uses models and modeling of effective practice
- Provides coaching and expert support
- Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- Is of sustainable duration. (p. 5)

According to Avalos as cited in Papp and Cottrell (2020), “professional development is about teachers learning how to learn and transforming their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students’ growth” (p. 4). Papp and Cottrell (2020) state that professional development has typically been a one-day in-service that features hands-on workshops, collaborative teamwork, or presentations that are often developed by schools and school division leaders. They feel professional development should be more sustainable.

### **2.10.1 Professional Development in Canada**

A 2017 study, *State of Educators’ Professional Learning in Canada* (Campbell, 2017) sought to investigate the state of professional learning for Canadian Educators. The study consisted of a multimethod design that included “an extensive review of publicly available documents” (Campbell, 2017) from provinces across the entire country. The purpose of this study “was to learn with and from the range of different experiences and evidence within Canada” (Campbell, 2017, p. 3). The study found 10 key principles of effective professional development that are consistent with the existing literature. Those 10 key principles fit into three key components: quality content, learning design and implementation and support and sustainability.

The study found that quality content is important for effective professional development. Across Canada, school systems are using evidence-informed<sup>4</sup> approaches to professional

<sup>4</sup> The term “evidence informed” is used to indicate that empirical evidence from research, evaluation, and data, as well as professional knowledge, expertise, and judgement are used to inform decisions (Campbell, 2017).

development. This means that the needs of students are assessed to inform professional learning priorities for educators. Campbell (2017) states:

Professional development in Canada appears to be evidence-informed but not data-driven; that is to say a range of voices, experiences, needs, and context inform a diversity of differentiation of content. (p. 8).

Campbell (2017) also acknowledges that there is no “one size fits all” approach to educator professional development within Canada. This allows provinces, school divisions, and schools to respond to the needs of students and educators.

Quality professional development addresses subject-specific and pedagogical content knowledge, which continues to be a priority in Canada. According to Campbell (2017), there is also a strong focus on student outcomes:

A focus on student-centered outcomes that includes a broad understanding of student achievement in addition to equity, engagement, learning, well-being, and many other outcomes, with recognition of the diversity of students’ contexts and needs linked to professional needs is important. (p. 12)

As well, there needs to be an appropriate balance between teacher voice and system required professional development (Campbell, 2017). This balance is complex as a 2014 Canada Teachers’ Federation national survey indicated that teacher autonomy was perceived by teachers to have eroded over time (Campbell, 2017). According to Campbell (2017) the main point of contention is who decides on the content and methods for teacher professional development.

The learning designs and how professional development is implemented is also an important consideration for educator professional development. According to Timperley, as cited by Campbell (2017): “teachers need access to multiple and varied opportunities to learn new content, gain insights, and apply new understandings to their daily practices” (p. 13). The evidence also supports the importance of collaboration “among educated professionals within and across classrooms, schools, districts, and systems” (Campbell, 2017, p. 14). Job embedded professional learning is also highly important as educators connect their learning to problems of practice (Campbell, 2017). As well, the “induction of mentorship can be a powerful job-embedded professional learning experience” (Campbell, 2017, p. 15). According to Campbell

(2017), mentorship could include professional development networks, coaching, peer observation, or even collaborative research on problems of practice.

According to Campbell (2017), in order for professional development to create enduring change it must be properly resourced over an adequate amount of time, and connected to a problem of practice that the teacher can relate to. As well, some aspect of teacher workload should be reduced to make way for the extra time commitment necessary for professional growth. Campbell (2017) also states that teachers often engage in professional development on their own time — evenings, weekend, holidays, and that some school divisions are finding creative solutions that allow opportunities for teachers to take on effective professional learning. Some examples of these solutions are imbedded professional days during the school year and creative scheduling to create alternative learning days for teachers and students (Campbell, 2017).

Effective professional development requires supportive and engaged leadership. School system leaders who are actively engaged in professional learning share their enthusiasm and create an atmosphere of support (Campbell, 2017). Campbell (2017) also states that governments and Ministries of Education also play a role in developing and supporting professional learning. They have the power to elevate or diminish professional learning based on the role they play.

### **2.10.2 Professional Development and Intercultural Competence**

According to Cushner, as cited in DeJaeghere and Cao (2009), intercultural competence is increasingly needed to teach effectively in K-12 schools. This is largely in part because most educators are Caucasian. A 2010 Government of Saskatchewan document, cited by Orlowski (2013), states that Indigenous teachers comprise five to six percent of teachers and administrators in Saskatchewan. DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) state “the achievement gap that persists between White and non-White students has called greater attention to the need for schools to provide culturally relevant teaching and learning” (p. 437) so that all children can be successful.

DeJaeghere and Cao (2009), define intercultural competence (ICC) “as an individual’s worldview, and in turn his or her perceptions and responses to cultural difference” (p. 438). It is also the ability to shift one’s cultural perspective in order to “adapt behavior to cultural commonalities and differences” (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009, p. 438). The Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is one model used in developing teacher intercultural

competence (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The DMIS is able to construct one's experience of cultural difference on a continuum from an ethnocentric or monocultural worldview or an ethnorelative or intercultural worldview (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). An ethnocentric or monocultural worldview is associated with denial and defense while the ethnorelative or intercultural worldview is associated with acceptance and adaptation (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) measures "individuals' construction of cultural difference along a continuum from monocultural to intercultural worldviews" (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009, p 438). According to DeJaeghere and Cao (2009), the IDD is used as an instrument for assessing educators and their developmental process and learning experiences. While these terms may seem complicated, it is important to have an understanding of them and how these worldviews can be changed through professional learning.

During this study teachers were able to do their own professional learning — taking courses, reading books, and participating in community activities (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The study did not look at any one kind of professional development, but it did find that change could be made to the ICC of an individual (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The change to a teachers' IDI score was significant when a school district implemented an intercultural training initiative and had an overall vision (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The extent to which teachers engaged with their own cultural awareness and understanding of cultural difference was thought to be a possible factor for changing a teacher's cultural competence (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009).

The study found that a teacher's intercultural anxiety or uncertainty affects how open they are to engage in a new way of thinking. Not all teachers respond positively, and schools need to carefully consider the types of professional development that they are willing to undertake (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). The professional development must be developmentally appropriate — it must support teachers' worldview but be appropriately challenging and supportive (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). If the professional development does not meet the needs of the teacher, it can be detrimental to their development. It will be important for school divisions to carefully consider and find ways to provide coherent professional development that supports teachers as they increase their cultural competency. These professional development considerations will be important for school divisions to consider if they plan to have teachers engage in anti-racist work within their classrooms.



### 2.10.3 Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogies

According to McCarty and Lee cited in Coulter and Jimenez-Silva (2017) Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogies (CSRP) seek “to revitalize and maintain languages and cultures that have suffered tremendously (and continue to suffer) under settler colonialism” (p. 3). Western schooling has been responsible for ongoing colonization that has taken away the ethnicity, languages, cultures, worldview and Land of Indigenous inhabitants (Coulter and Jimenez-Silva, 2017). There are three components of CSRP:

- 1.) It deals directly with the asymmetrical power relation and goals of colonization.
- 2.) It acknowledges the need to revitalize and reclaim that which has been stolen by colonization.
- 3.) It recognizes the need for community-based accountability (Coulter and Jimenez-Silva, 2017).

CSRP is a powerful tool to resist ongoing colonization for Indigenous peoples.

In summary the literature on educator professional development strongly supports that professional development can create positive change in many areas including intercultural competence, and culturally sustaining and revitalizing practices. When the professional development is sustained over a long enough period of time, the change is more profound and lasting. Educators need to be given some flexibility to choose the professional development that best fits their needs and context, but it needs to be challenging enough to stretch their learning. Governments, Ministries of Education, and school divisions must adequately resource professional development for it to be successful. This includes creating the appropriate amount of time and space within the embedded day, which may take some creative scheduling. Teacher workload intensification needs to be considered carefully so that teachers have the ability to focus on the professional development they are undertaking in meaningful ways. What this means is that some things may need to be taken off the collective “teacher plate” in order to allow teachers to focus on their own learning and growth. Leadership from governments, the Ministry of Education, school division, school-based administrators, and teacher leaders can play a critical role in creating a common vision. In-school administrators also have a profound role to play as they can set the tone, enthusiasm and vision for professional development. When administrators engage in professional learning alongside teachers, they have the unique advantage of elevating the importance of the common vision

## 2.11 The Educational Debt

Systemic and institutional racism has had and continues to have a significant impact on Indigenous graduation rates (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). “That Indigenous peoples benefit the least from publicly funded education has long been suspected; but the degree to which race influences educational outcomes has been made abundantly clear” (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019, p. 234). As Krueger (2016) asserts, “possibly the greatest crisis facing the education system in Saskatchewan is the abysmally low rates of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) graduation” (p. 1). According to the provincial auditor, Judy Ferguson, as reported by CBC News (Rutherford, 2017) the Indigenous graduation rate in Saskatchewan is only 42 percent, while the non-Indigenous graduation rate is 84.5 percent. Ferguson’s report also included that in the Living Sky School Division, which includes Unity, Spiritwood, and North Battleford, the graduation rate is 32 percent (Rutherford, 2017). When asked about this abysmally low graduation rate the director, Randy Fox, stated, “School can be obviously a very challenging place and a very discouraging place if you can’t read at least close to a high school level” (CBC News, 2017, 17 para.). Not shocking is the way that Fox describes so called White innocence on the part of the school division which puts the blame for low Indigenous graduation rates onto the students.

The low Indigenous graduation rate is often referred to as an achievement gap. Citing the work of Ladson-Billings, Orlowski and Cottrell (2019) argue that the term ‘achievement gap’ unfairly places the blame where it does not belong “because it implies a cultural deficit rather than an institutional deficit that further privileges dominant groups” (p. 7). Orlowski and Cottrell (2019) argue that a case can be made for an educational debt being owed to Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan as the result of a century of colonization. Adding further to their argument they state that some may blame low Indigenous graduation rates on cultural deficit discourse, but that it is colonialism that is to be blamed for the ongoing educational gap.

The abysmal statistics on the chronic underfunding of First Nations education illustrate the point that there is indeed an educational gap—one that is monetary. In 2016 the federal Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that the funding gap for First Nations students living on reserve was estimated at \$665 million. “The Liberal government committed \$2.6 billion over five years in its 2016 budget toward Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada education funding” (Morin, 2016). Sadly, Indigenous students receive about 30 percent less funding than their non-

Indigenous peers (Conwell, 2017). The underfunding of Indigenous education has likely contributed greatly to the educational gap in achievement. The chronic underfunding of Indigenous education is another example of systemic racism and it must be addressed and corrected.

## **2.12 Overview Treaty Education in Saskatchewan**

The vision for Treaty Education in Saskatchewan started in 2000 with a partnership between the OTC and the Ministry of Education. At the time, Saskatchewan was governed by the left leaning Saskatchewan New Democratic Party. The creation of Treaty Education sought the input and support of “many First Nations Elders, teachers, administrators and consultants who were involved since the project started” (Office of the Treaty Commissioner & Government of Saskatchewan, 2018, p. 2). The Ministry of Education is credited with providing significant financial support for Treaty Education initiatives (Office of the Treaty Commissioner & Government of Saskatchewan, 2018 p. 3).

In 2008, The Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the Ministry of Saskatchewan, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, worked together to implement mandatory Treaty Education in Saskatchewan (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015). The program was intended to “challenge teachers and students to disrupt the production of [White] dominance through curricula” (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 567). The OTC and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education created Treaty Resource Kits in 2008 to provide teachers with the resources necessary to implement Treaty Education in their classrooms. Each school in the province received a kit, and many teachers received training in the use of the kit in grades 7-12 (Tupper & Cappello, 2008).

There is some evidence that the uptake on teaching Treaty Education has been slow among teachers. A study conducted by Tupper and Cappello (2008) “examines the importance of Treaty Education for students living in a province entirely ceded through Treaty” (p. 559). According to Tupper and Cappello Treaty Education that had an anti-racist perspective resulted in a discernable shift in the perspectives of students. They explain that “more than curriculum and its role in dominance, we can trace the effects of teaching Treaty into confronting racism” (Tupper & Cappello, p. 572). However, Tupper and Cappello (2008) also noticed that students struggled with the different material encountered between the Native Studies and history class.

One student said, “his Native Studies class caused him to question whose knowledge he was supposed to be learning” (Tupper & Cappello, 2008, p. 575). Statements like this illustrate the problem with having Treaty Education as a stand-alone and elective subject.

According to Schick (2012), one of the problems with the Treaty kit is that the content can be shared with students while ignoring issues of power, privilege, racism, and factors that continue to marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. The fact of the matter is that Treaty Education is history, but it is a history that will offer a completely different narrative than most residents of the province of Saskatchewan have ever heard before. It is a counter hegemonic narrative that challenges the status quo. As a result, conservative leaning residents will likely view Treaty Education as another attempt to use schools to indoctrinate students into a liberal bias.

In Saskatchewan, both teacher education programs have requirements for a minimum number of credits in Native Studies as a prerequisite for admission, and once accepted into the program, teacher candidates are required to take a compulsory course in anti-racism and anti-oppressive course (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015). Prior to 2016, student applicants were asked to write a 150-word statement on what it means to say that “We are all Treaty People”, a slogan adopted in 2008 by the Saskatchewan government. Orlowski and Cottrell conducted a study in 2013 and through critical discourse analysis were able to “analyze the ideological effects of each [student’s] position, whether intended or not” (p. 239). At the time of the study, potential teacher candidates would have had a minimum of one year of Treaty Education in the K-12 school system, and at least one Native Studies class. Candidates needed to be able to demonstrate a level of understanding of what the “We are all Treaty people statement meant. One objective was to see how many students knew that Treaty obligations had not been met by the Federal government. The results of their study demonstrated that students who had experienced Treaty Education or had taken more than one Native Studies course had gained a perspective of how Treaty obligations had not been fulfilled and that settlers were the primary beneficiaries. They concluded by taking the position that “teachers and teacher educators must focus pedagogy on teaching about treaties in Saskatchewan, their history, their current status, and their potential to shape Saskatchewan’s future in a positive manner” (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2015, p. 248).

Yu (2012) references Howard's 2006 book, *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* which points out that "students of color in the United States reached 40% in 2002 [and] at the same time, 90% of public school teachers are White" (p. 47). Yu (2012) cites Howard when he says, "to successfully teach diverse students, White teachers must develop a healthy White racial identity, one that challenges White privilege and the systemic oppression of racial minorities under White domination" (p. 47). Yu (2012) takes the stance that the election of Barak Obama signaled the end of an era and that many "White folks were ready to declare the struggle against racism over" (p. 47). However, racism is still far from over and can be seen in the disproportionate number of black and brown people incarcerated and living in poverty, as well as the social protest movement Black Lives Matter.

The feeling of being Canadian is heavily tied to colonial settler ideas that the land was empty when we arrived. One of the legacies of colonization according to Tupper (2012):

includes perceptions that First Nations people are incapable of running their own affairs, that they are corrupt, that they do not work hard enough, are too dependent on government handouts, and that the problems they face are of their own making. (p. 145)

Tupper (2012) agrees with Yu when she states that "relatively few Canadians know about or understand what [treaties] are or the role they have played in the country's past and that this has serious implications for citizenship education" (p. 146). Tupper points to the possibilities of Treaty Education to disrupt the reliance on asking students to contemplate how it would feel to be a "poor Indian" or to depend on approaches that focus on "damaged centered" that "continually position Indigenous peoples as victims" (Tupper, 2012, p. 147). Instead, teachers and students must examine our complicated colonial past and the damage it has created. She adds that it is "unethical for students to live as Treaty people without doing the difficult and often uncomfortable work of coming to understand what it means to be a Treaty person" (Tupper, 2012, p. 147). That difficult work is often coming to terms with our own power and privilege as White settlers.

Historically schools have privileged Western Eurocentric knowledge above Indigenous knowledge. Barnhardt, (2007) writes "Indigenous views of the world and approaches to education have been brought into jeopardy with the spread of Western values, social structures

and institutionalized forms of cultural transmission” (p. 6). Throughout history, Indigenous peoples have faced cultural deficit discourse around their knowledge systems.

Granting higher status to Western knowledge can be seen in many ways across Canada. One example would be in the way we use an industrial model to educate our students in rows, in desks, sitting quietly. In contrast, Indigenous groups often meet in a circle. Treaty Education calls us to include Indigenous knowledge systems and worldview into all subject areas. Barnhardt supports integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into the school curriculum as one way to restore balance. Barnhardt (2007) states:

The depth of Indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers lessons that can benefit everyone, from educator to scientist, as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live on this planet. (p. 5)

Treaty Education offers us an opportunity to honor Indigenous knowledge as legitimate and valued.

### **2.12.1 Current context in Saskatchewan**

In this section I will give an overview of three programs that are and have been used in Saskatchewan schools. Several of my participants referred to these programs during data collection. It is important to have general understanding of each program and the intent of each program in the context of Treaty Education in Saskatchewan. It is the eleventh year that Treaty Education has been in place in Saskatchewan. Taking inventory of some of the programs that have been in place to further Treaty Education will help us gain a broad context. For the purpose of this literature review, I will focus on a few key programs that were mentioned by research participants in an effort to understand those programs more fully.

### **2.12.2 The Treaty Catalyst Program**

A Time for Significant Leadership (ASTFL) is a capacity building strategy that was implemented in Saskatchewan in 2009. From this program came the Treaty catalyst teacher. Initially ASTFL called for Catalyst Leadership Teams, but that term has morphed into Treaty catalyst teachers. “The Catalyst Leadership Team is integral to the successful implementation of processes involving significant and transformational change” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009). The basic framework for the ATFSL is a repetitive cycle of planning, action, reflection,

and evaluation. It is believed that through this cyclical process, continuous improvement can be achieved. Saskatchewan Learning saw this program as a way to support school divisions as they developed First Nations and Métis education plans. The program was intended to align with other initiatives such as the Continuous Improvement Framework, Curriculum Development, and SchoolsPLUS. It was created to honor the recommendations of the First Nations and Métis Education Provincial Advisory Committee (FNMEPAC).

When the program was rolled out there were two key parts to the process. The first was introducing the program to school division leaders. The second part was the implementation of the Catalyst Leadership Team. The intended goal was to foster and strengthen good working relationships, create positive communication around controversial topics, introduce and establish work plans, develop a communication and reporting strategy, and to build capacity at the school level with administrators, staff, students, and community (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009).

The process was to begin with an audit with Four Broad Areas of Recommendation that were drawn from the Action Plan of First Nations and Métis Provincial Education Advisory Committee (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009). Those four recommended areas were: cultural affirmation and school climate, shared decision-making, curriculum actualization, and lifelong learning. The first area aimed for the “promotion of scholastic well-being by affirming cultures, traditions, languages, spirituality and worldview of *all* students (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009).

One of the key principles of A Time For Significant Leadership includes understanding that First Nations and Métis worldview are valid, and that all people must have equitable opportunities to succeed. Some of the stated goals were to obtain “equitable outcomes for First Nations and Métis learners [and to] provide leadership and support to school-based catalyst teams” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009). A goal would be to make learning environments safe and holistic with the idea that learners benefit from culturally affirming and responsive learning.

At the community level, ATFSL would be committed to social justice and equality. At the division level, catalyst leaders were to support schools with developing and monitoring plans for First Nations and Métis Education (FNME). Additionally, catalyst teachers were to establish a climate of caring and commitment.

Within the framework for ATFSL taking an anti-racist approach to Treaty Education is not explicitly stated. However, within the recommended resources and strategies section are books and resources that do reference having courageous conversations about sensitive topics like race, power, and privilege. It is hard to know for sure what the intent was of putting these resources into a small reference section of the framework. One could assume that taking an anti-racist approach to Treaty Education was not made an explicit goal.

In 2016, Needham and Cottrell facilitated a collaborative research project with Treaty catalyst teachers from across the province of Saskatchewan. They had nine participants that ranged from beginning teacher to experienced teacher, from public, Catholic, and a First Nation controlled school systems. There were a mix of elementary and high school teachers as well as senior administrators and a university professor. The purpose of the research was to deepen the understanding of culturally responsive education in Saskatchewan through an analysis of the enacted curriculum.

Through this research catalyst teachers had the benefit of being able to dialogue with peers, have their voices heard, as well as documenting their experiences, challenges, and accomplishments (Needham & Cottrell, 2016). Needham and Cottrell (2016) identify several themes that emerge from the research including resistance, racism, ignorance, resources, alignment, and sustainability. One of the “greatest impediment[s] to the work on teaching treaties and infusing Indigenous content into the Saskatchewan curriculum identified by participants in our study was the racism which some described as pervasive in their schools and communities (Needham & Cottrell, 2016). This racism came in many forms, from benign to more overt and directed towards students. The racism was from students, parents, and even teachers. Some teachers felt isolated in their social justice work and spoke about how they alienated family and colleagues by discussing our Treaty history (Needham & Cottrell, 2016).

Other challenges that Treaty educators addressed was resistance from colleagues, parents, and students stemming from a lack of knowledge and awareness around treaties and our colonial history. As mentioned before, many residents of our province and country are colonial-blind, as our true history was never taught in schools prior to 2008.

Additionally, for Indigenous teachers, many of whom were the only Indigenous people on staff, they had the added challenge of unreasonable expectations put upon them. When any



Treaty content arose, they were expected to be the Treaty expert. Indigenous teachers in this study also reported feeling isolated and vulnerable (Needham & Cottrell, 2016).

There were many positive themes that emerged from Needham and Cottrell's (2016) collaborative research. Many of the participants felt that their Treaty catalyst training had provided them with opportunities for personal and professional growth. Many of these teachers were drawn to Treaty Education because of their experience in their interest in social justice. Many of the teachers had to unpack their own power and privilege as a process of doing this work (Needham & Cottrell, 2016). Treaty catalyst teachers were also willing to embrace additional professional development and leadership opportunities. Participants who were more interested in more non-traditional sources of knowledge also felt that collaborative partnerships widened their pedagogical approaches (Needham & Cottrell, 2016).

Needham and Cottrell (2016) claim that their study aligns with a growing body of research that found:

that creating more invitational and culturally affirming classrooms through the infusion of Indigenous content, perspectives and ways of knowing into curriculum and pedagogy is the most effective means of improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students in Saskatchewan and beyond. (p. 23)

It must also be noted that participants described pervasive racism among students, parents and colleagues as a form of resistance to the infusion of Indigenous content into curriculum. In some extreme cases the resistance was targeted at the presence of Indigenous students in provincial schools. Resistance is a phenomenon identified by St. Denis, and it must be confronted as a part of the critical work done in schools.

### **2.12.3 Following Their Voices**

In 2014 the Saskatchewan Government and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) announced the historic Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). This was the first ever province-wide plan developed with all education sector partners, including 28 school divisions. The ESSP provided short- and long-term goals for education leading into 2020. The priorities for the sector specifically highlight First Nations and Métis learning outcomes (Saskatchewan Government, 2014). Following Their Voices is an initiative prioritized by the ESSP, with the goal of improving First Nations and Métis outcomes.

In 2014 the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education commissioned a research study called *Seeking Their Voices: Improving Indigenous Student Learning Outcomes*. This research sought the voices of Métis and First Nations students, parents/caregivers, teachers, and administrators. Focus groups and interview methods were used to seek the voices of students, parents, caregivers, and school staff from provincial and First Nations schools. The analysis of the focus groups and feedback of Elders was coined *Hearing Their Voices* (Following Their Voices n.d.).

What the researchers heard was that engaged and non-engaged First Nations and Métis students expressed concerns around racism, stereotypes, and bullying in school environments. The students also indicated that school had more meaning when teachers demonstrated genuine concern for students and for student learning. Students wanted to feel that teachers believed they could be successful. Parents stressed the importance of caring student-teacher relationships with high expectations for student success and culturally relevant learning.

Three salient themes emerged from *Seeking Their Voices*: “enhancing relationships between students and teachers; creating structures and supports for teachers and school administrators to work together to improve teaching and learning interactions with students; and creating safe well-managed learning environments (Following Their Voices, n.d., p. 7). The Ministry of Education responded by creating a collaborative group of individuals from across the sector to develop a pedagogical response. The Guiding Vision for FTV is “education that promotes accelerated learning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students where learning is joyful, culture is affirmed, and students given real choice for their future” (Following Their Voices, n.d., p. 6). This guiding vision informs the work that is to be done under this program.

A ‘made-in-Saskatchewan’ instructional model was created. It involves having a foundational understanding of FTV Guiding Vision; teacher observation and feedback; teacher instructional goal setting; teacher group goal setting to strategically support FNMI student achievement; shadow coaching to develop culturally responsive pedagogy; weekly staff huddles; teacher reflection; and an emphasis on data to influence strategic decision-making (Following Their Voices n.d.). Several tools are used to help support positive change: observation, goal setting, walk-through, reflection, and surveys. The data collected from these tools helps to form a frame of indicators that capture changes and improvements in teacher practice (Following Their

Voices, n.d., p. 11). The model allows for a cyclical process of goal setting, observation, and feedback for teachers to enhance student learning.

In February of 2015, Following Their Voices was launched in five provincial schools with a strong focus on student-teacher relationships, teacher instructional practices, and the learning environment. The purpose was to test and gain teacher input on the initiative. In the fall of 2015, 17 schools began the initiative. A dramatic uptake of the program in 2018 saw 39 schools, 570 teachers, and over 14,000 students involved (Following Their Voices, n.d.).

The goal of the program is to see First Nations and Métis graduations rates increase to 50 percent by 2020 (Following their Voices, n.d.). In 2015 only 41.9 percent of First Nations and Métis students graduated within three years of starting grade 10 (Following their Voices, n.d.). In 2017, 43.2 percent of First Nations and Métis students graduated on time (Government of Saskatchewan, 2017). The program will measure success through increased student attendance, student marks, credit attainment, and graduation rates (Following Their Voices, n.d.). The graduation rates are expected to improve over the next three to five years.

The 2017-2018 school year marked a significant milestone for FTV as the first three-year cycle was completed for the original sixteen schools who implemented the program. These schools will no longer receive funding for the program and will transition into a maintenance model with the expectation that they continue the FTV practices. With the constant influx and change experienced on some school staffs it will be interesting to see if this program can be sustained without specific and ongoing financial support to educating new teachers entering the schools.

#### **2.12.4 Leadership for Learning Framework**

The Leadership for Learning program was created in 2010 by the Saskatoon Public School Division (SPS). The program has an affiliation with Indspire and SUNCOR Energy Foundation. The program was created in response to a recommendation made by The Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People in Saskatchewan. The recommendation called on divisions to “ensure the ongoing professional learning of all teachers and staff members responsible for educating Indigenous youth” (Bourassa, 2017, p. 13).

The objectives of the program are to support leadership, outline and implement achievable goals of leadership, and to support teachers in continuous improvement of learning outcomes. At the heart of the model are student learning and achievement. The goal is to help teachers create culturally responsive schools through building meaningful relationships with students. It is hoped that the leadership program will have a positive impact on student engagement, increased graduation rates for Indigenous students, and increased safety and attendance. As well, the leadership program aimed for the creation of culturally responsive classrooms, and to be a response to the TRC calls to action and reconciliation by incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, perspectives, and history into all classrooms. The framework is hoped to allow for co-creators, staff, teachers, and students to learn alongside each other in respectful ways while establishing best practice (Bourassa, 2017).

Beliefs, vision, relationships, and culture make up the four foundational concepts of Leadership for Learning. The model states that teachers must believe that students are capable of achieving success by setting high expectations for learning. A common vision that is shared by all staff propels continuous improvement. The creation of strong relationships between staff, parents, and community is seen as essential to having the energy necessary for learning improvement. Culture is considered vital for enhancing structures, working conditions, and relationships (Bourassa, 2017). However, St. Denis (2007) contends that:

cultural revitalization is only part of the solution and ironically, as a solution, it also contributes to other problems for some Indigenous peoples. As a solution, cultural revitalization places the burden of change on Indigenous peoples, yet again. (p. 1080)

More culture is not the solution to colonization, and on its own, placing too much emphasis on cultural revitalization may actually be harmful.

To connect these four foundational concepts four vital processes were identified: communicating, aligning, managing, and monitoring. In addition, four central concepts were also established: setting and living priorities, leading and engaging in learning, ensuring expected practice, and sharing leadership.

The framework goes on to state that “in order to increase the type of Indigenous student engagement necessary to impact learning outcomes, the depth of change required will challenge all those involved in Saskatchewan education” (Bourassa, 2017). Educators will be expected to confront their own assumptions about teaching and learning. First Nations and Métis content, ways of knowing, and perspectives are stated to be “an integral aspect of Saskatchewan pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 programming” (Bourassa, 2017, p. 13). The OurSCHOOL and Tell Them From Me surveys will be used to measure engagement of positive relationships.

The creation of culturally responsive schools is viewed as a critical way to increase learning achievement for students who are marginalized due to poverty, systemic racism, and intergenerational historical trauma. Teachers are called upon to validate cultural identity rather than be color-blind. It is noted that teachers are in a position where they can neutralize the negative effects of oppression. However, the framework also points out that teacher biases, such as low expectations, blaming students for socio-cultural and economic situations create toxic learning environments (Bourassa, 2017). The framework furthers that teachers must have professional development that goes further than simply telling teachers to be more inclusive.

Of note, Saskatoon Public Schools closely aligns with several Indspire principles, specifically principle 7, which states:

Recognizing the legacy of the colonial histories of Indigenous peoples, education is also a process of decolonization which seeks to strengthen, enhance, and embrace Indigenous Knowledge and experience through various strategies, including but not limited to anti-racist, anti-oppressive pedagogies, and Indigenous pedagogues. (Bourassa, 2017, p. 17)

SPS acknowledges that this is the reason that they have co-created the Leadership for Learning Framework.

Significant educator training is seen to be the key moving forward, and teachers will be asked to question how their ingrained ideas may be hindering how culturally responsive they are in their classrooms and schools. Further acknowledging their commitment to creating culturally responsive classrooms and schools, the framework states that “decolonizing requires a certain amount of risk to do things in an entirely different way” (Bourassa, 2017, p. 19). The SPS also recognizes that “this shift in power and knowing is not only acceptable, but necessary”

(Bourassa, 2017, p. 19). In summary, the Leadership for Learning calls on teachers to decolonize their thinking and their classrooms as a way to increase First Nations and Métis graduation rates.

### **2.12.5 Project of the Heart**

There are several curricular initiatives to disrupt the ongoing effects of colonialism. One approach, critical peacebuilding, has the power to help educators and teachers examine power structures and to disrupt the pervasive colonial blindness of settler society. Unsettling learners is integral to decolonization, Tupper (2014) states that:

Those who have been ignorant of the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual violence endured by Indigenous students in residential schools, or the many other forms of oppression and violence perpetuated on the Indigenous peoples of Canada, are confronted with the emotional terrain of learning that is necessary to come to know the world differently. (p. 472)

Tupper (2014) describes her own work to “actively disrupt colonialism” (p. 474) in her own work with preservice teachers. Through Project of the Heart, a collaborative inquiry between third year preservice teachers and grade 12 students, Tupper has continued to disrupt the colonial narrative. Preservice teachers face their own colonial blindness and actively work to trouble the settler narrative with grade 12 students. The work is described as a journey to unlearn and unpack colonial views. At times that journey has ups and downs for both her and her students (Tupper, 2014).

### **2.13 Summary**

Talk of racism is often silenced in the classroom which challenges educators when they ask students to consider issues of power, privilege, and racism. Most Canadians maintain White innocence by believing in romantic ideas of how the land was settled. Historic notions of First Nations people being lazy, dependent on handouts, unable to care for themselves, and responsible for their own problems feed into White settler ignorance and resistance. An argument can be made, however, that rather than focusing on the achievement gap, the province of Saskatchewan owes an education debt to Indigenous learners.

Forms of multicultural education that do not require an examination of power can further marginalize Indigenous people. Teachers and students need to be taught to see the hidden forms

of power and racism in order to challenge hegemony. When done correctly, teacher professional development is an effective tool that can be used to raise teacher cultural competency that would facilitate epistemological and ontological change, which is the purpose of Treaty Education. One approach that has been effective is Treaty catalyst training. Programs like Following Their Voices show great promise as a tool for creating lasting change in teacher practice.

For Saskatchewan educators, teaching Treaty Education is a constant journey to unsettle and unpack our colonial blindness. It is as much about teacher learning as it is about helping students to learn about our history and ongoing colonialism. It is imperative that as we set goals for the future, we take stock of where we are, and evaluate the progress we have made. Treaty Education was mandated eleven years ago in the province of Saskatchewan. It is time to gain an understanding of what we have accomplished and where we still need to go.

## **Chapter 3 Design and Methodology**

What are supports and obstacles for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan?

The methodology was chosen based on what would be the best approach to answer these research questions.

Main Research question: What are supports and obstacles for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan?

Research Sub-Questions:

- What are some of the specific ways that the OTC Treaty resource kit is being utilized by teachers engaged in Saskatchewan classrooms?
- How are Saskatchewan teachers thinking about Treaty resources that have been made available to them?
- How and where are teachers locating and creating resources on their own to fulfil the mandate of Treaty Education?
- How do teachers address White privilege when engaging with Treaty Education?

### **3.1 Introduction**

Given the research questions stated above, I have selected Critical Discourse Analysis as the appropriate methodology. In this chapter I will outline the theoretical framework, methodology undertaken, and the study design. This section will also address participant recruitment and issues pertaining to data collection and analysed. The logistics and the ethics for this research will also be explained.

Power is derived through language. According to Wodak (2001), “language is intertwined with social power in a number of ways” (p. 11), specifically, language allows for expressions of power. She states that “power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge, subvert, alter, and distribute power” (Wodak, 2001, p. 11). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is one method used to critically examine how power is created and maintained through discourse, and it is specifically interested in the unequal distribution of power between the dominant and those who are othered. According to van Dijk (1993), CDA analysts focus “on the



role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (p. 24) and examine the structures and strategies that play a role.

### **3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

I believe that we have to examine power structures within society in order to dismantle the systems that are in place and intended to hold Indigenous peoples down. According to Henry Giroux (1985) “power is the basis of all forms of behavior in which people resist, struggle, and fight for their image of a better world. What is essential is to understand how power is manifested” (p. 91). According to Yu (2012), “we must analyze and challenge our own perceptions, attitudes, and understandings as social beings who are gendered, raced, and classed. With such critical reflection, we can possibly work to improve skills as anti-racist and transformative educators” (p. 51). It is necessary to examine how teachers perceive power systems and teach about those systems to their students. If they are not teaching their students about power, we must understand why they are not and what barriers they face.

Critical examination of a society is one way to dismantle the structures that are intended to hold the other down. If you cannot see or understand the structures intended to privilege one group over another, you cannot actively work to obtain equality. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, my research was conducted with a Critical Theory perspective. Bohman (2016) states that the goal of critical theorists is to “seek ‘human emancipation’ in circumstances of domination and oppression” (2016, 2nd para.). I agree with this sentiment and feel compelled to work towards a more just society for Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan. Treaty Education should be one way that we work towards a more just society for Indigenous peoples, and therefore examining how educators are using Treaty Education to teach their students about power is of interest to me.

Important concepts to CDA are power, history, and ideology. Power is examined to ascertain how language is used to uphold structures that maintain unequal power and unequal dynamics. It is necessary to examine history to determine how power structures were produced, maintained, interpreted, as well as resistance to the imbalance of power. The political ideology of the group that maintains power must also be examined as those ideologies are used to (re)produce power (Wodak, 2001). While examining teacher interview transcripts I looked for how teachers in Saskatchewan produce or disrupt forms of dominant power over those who are othered.

Examining each participant's words for racism was not the specific objective. Rather, I wanted to examine the larger context of power in the education system in relation to Treaty Education.

Power is derived through language. According to Wodak (2001), "language is intertwined with social power in a number of ways" (p. 11), specifically, language allows for expressions of power. She goes on to state that "power does not derive from language, but language can be used to challenge, subvert, alter, and distribute power" (Wodak, 2001, p. 11). Critical Discourse Analysis is one method used to critically examine how power is created and maintained through discourse, and it is specifically interested in the unequal distribution of power between the dominant and those who are othered. According to van Dijk (1993), CDA analysts focus "on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (p. 24) and examine the structures and strategies that play a role.

When thinking about power and language, one can assume that general commands by those in authority are an obvious example. When a teacher directs a child to do something, power is exerted by an adult over a child through the use of language. However, this is only one obvious form of language displaying power. When it comes to White dominance, holding power through language is much more complicated and hidden. By examining text style, rhetoric, and strategies used to conceal social power relations, like omitting and playing down, CDA affords us a tool to critically examine and disrupt uneven power structures (van Dijk, 1993). Through the lens of CDA, I actively looked for ways in which language demonstrates forms of power.

### **3.3 Data**

A total of 11 teachers participated in this study (see Table 3.1). There were nine women and two men. One person self-identified as First Nations, two self-identified as Métis, and eight identified as White or White settler. Six of the participants taught in high school, three taught in elementary, one taught primary, but had recently moved down from middle years to grades 5, 4, and most recently grade 3. Another educator was a prekindergarten teacher. Three teachers were Following Their Voices leaders. Seven teachers had taken some form of Treaty catalyst training in the past. One teacher was a half time Treaty Education coach and the other half time a high school teacher. Four participants identified that they worked in privileged schools with a high percentage of White-settler students. Three teachers were from Prince Albert, four teachers were from Saskatoon, three teachers were from Regina, and one teacher was from a Band school in

rural Saskatchewan. One teacher taught in a private school. The experience ranged from four and a half years of teaching to 32 years of experience with a median average of 15 years.

Table 3.1 Educator Profiles

Teacher	Self-identified as Indigenous or Non-Indigenous	grades taught	Years of Experience	Additional roles	Language of Instruction	School System
Claire	Non-Indigenous	high school	23	FTV Leader	English	public
Angela	Indigenous	high school with elementary background	11	FTV Leader and Indigenous perspectives coach	English	public
Christine	Indigenous	high school	4.5	FTV educator	English and Cree	public
James	Non-Indigenous	high school	10	FTV Leader	English	public
Susan	Non-Indigenous	pre-kindergarten	15		English	public

Teacher	Self-identified as Indigenous or Non-Indigenous	grades taught	Years of Experience	Additional roles	Language of Instruction	School System
Gabe	Non-Indigenous	High school	15		English	private
Mary	Non-Indigenous	middle years	32		English	public
Morgan	Non-Indigenous	middle years with high school background	9		French	public
Kelsey	Non-Indigenous	middle years	23	gifted education	English	public
Samantha	Indigenous	high school	10		Not identified	band
Emma	Non-Indigenous	primary with a middle years background	23		English	public

Middle years teachers have a significant amount of Treaty Education content that they must cover, and as a middle years teacher, their views on how to best deliver that content is of significant interest to me. In these grade levels topics such as the Indian Act, Indian residential schools, and treaties are covered and are of great importance to understanding the perspectives of Indigenous peoples as well as Treaty obligations that have gone unmet by the Government of Canada.

There are several qualitative approaches. A narrative approach usually involves just one or two individuals (Sauro, 2015). Interviews can be conducted over weeks, months, or even years and is presented as a story (Sauro, 2015). This approach would not create a broad picture of Treaty Education in Saskatchewan.

Phenomenological research allows a researcher to understand an event or activity by studying participants' perspectives (Sauro, 2015). This method requires a researcher to conduct numerous interviews to build a large enough dataset to look for emerging themes (Sauro, 2015). This type of research did not seem appropriate for examining Treaty Education as it is not an event or a phenomenon.

Semi-structured interviews allow for face-to-face conversations. Because of the nature of an interview this can be a personal experience for both the interviewee and person conducting the interview. One of the benefits of conducting interviews is that I can probe for further insight. Interviews are also an easy way for respondents to share their opinions and impressions. A survey would not allow me to learn the same amount of information about Treaty Education because it would miss out on the nuance in the responses from participants. A face-to-face semi-structured interview allows me to ask all participants the same questions, but to follow up on their answers and probe for deeper understanding. When participants mention something that is unexpected I am able to follow that up and learn more about it. Conducting interviews in this method allows me to get to the real heart of how teachers are feeling about Treaty Education.

It was important for me to interview a broad grade range of teachers to get a bigger picture of how teachers in urban Saskatchewan experience teaching Treaty Education. There is an advantage to being an educator interviewing other educators. There is no power imbalance between me, as an educator, and other educators. If there was a power imbalance, teachers may

not feel they can be completely honest in their answers. When there is an equal amount of power, this is called studying sideways.

In order to discover what teachers consider to be best practices when teaching Treaty Education and how they use the Treaty Kit to supplement that work, it was necessary to ask eight to 12 open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). I probed for further elaboration, and clarification in an effort to understand more deeply their position and to create a feeling of openness for the participant (Creswell, 2012). I aimed to make the interview process friendly and conversational.

To increase trustworthiness and transferability it was important to create questions that were clear and that participants understood what they are being asked (Creswell, 2012). It was my job to make sure that participants were able to feel calm and relaxed and that they understood the question. When they did not understand a question, I reframed it the best that I could so that they understood what I was asking. I began each interview with the same set of questions, although sometimes the conversation led to different probing questions. I asked probing questions to learn more deeply from these teachers.

The rationale for selecting this group of educators is to achieve a representative sampling of elementary and high school educators within the three largest urban cities. Diversity is important because I want this study to be a good representation of urban teachers across a variety of grades, subject areas, school divisions, within the province. I wanted to speak with educators who are passionate about Treaty Education to understand their views on what works well for them. I also wanted to know about their experiences with the Treaty Education kit and how effective they find the new supplementary material in supporting the curricular outcomes.

Participants in this study were recruited through a poster that asked for Saskatchewan teachers who were passionate about Treaty Education (see Appendix A). To be eligible for the study, teachers had to be working in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, or Regina, in the K-12 school system. I was mostly interested in what teachers in the large urban centers had to say about

<sup>5</sup> Best practice is a phrase that is sometimes thought to be synonymous with the standardization of teaching and high stakes testing. I chose to use this language as it is used by the TRC in the 63<sup>rd</sup> call to action. In this case best practice refers to what the teachers engaged in Treaty Education consider to be the best approaches to covering this content.

Treaty Education. The recruitment poster was circulated on the Facebook group SAFE Anti-Racist Anti-Oppressive Educators. The poster was also shared with the Treaty catalyst teacher group for Saskatoon Greater Saskatoon Catholic School System through an email with the recruitment poster attached (see Appendix C). It was shared with a similar group of teachers in the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. Participation was voluntary.

The teachers accepted into the study met the following criteria: they taught in Regina, Saskatoon, or Prince Albert. One additional teacher was accepted from a Band School in rural Saskatchewan. She contacted me through the Facebook group SAFE Anti-Racist Anti-Oppressive Educators Teachers and told me she lived in Saskatoon and taught high school. Since I had accepted her and she fit the main criteria of having taught in Saskatchewan and was familiar with Treaty Education, I was willing to waive the limitations I had imposed for being from one of the three major urban centers. Potential participants had to have taught in Saskatchewan and they had to be familiar with Treaty Education. I also selected teachers based on grade level and subject specialty. I was interested in hearing from a variety of elementary and middle years teachers, and high teachers. I also wanted to get a variety of experience levels from newer teacher to more experienced. I tried to get a broad representation of the entire K-12 school system in Saskatchewan.

Creswell (2012) states that “qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore” (p. 16). The design I used was qualitative as I conducted one-on-one open-ended interviews with my participants. I chose this design because I want to gain insight into what urban Saskatchewan teachers find to be best practice when teaching Treaty Education. I want to know what resources teachers are using to fulfill the Treaty Education curricular requirements, as well as how they successfully engage their students in this important learning. In the fall of 2018, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner developed a Treaty Education supplementary binder for kindergarten to grade 9 education, which is now available for use (Vandenbreekel, 2018). As a part of my research I wanted to ascertain how this new resource supports teachers to reach the intended goal of Treaty Education. Participants were familiar with Treaty Education and actively work to meet the mandate of Treaty Education as set out by the government of Saskatchewan.

I also asked teachers questions that pertained to power. I asked them to share how their administrator supports Treaty Education. I also asked how they tackle issues of power and privilege within their own classrooms. I asked teachers about how parents and students resist Treaty Education. I wanted to understand how teachers are impacted and navigating the resistance that some White settlers have to Treaty Education. I also asked teachers to describe how they made their classrooms open, inviting and welcoming to Indigenous students. I also asked them about how they are decolonizing their classrooms and teaching practice.

Interviews with teachers allowed for a more nuanced view of how teachers achieve the curricular goal of Treaty Education. According to Hargreaves (2013), when teachers understand what comprises best practice, they can increase student achievement. Therefore, understanding best practice around Treaty Education can help educators implement effective strategies to achieve the goals of Treaty Education.

Participants were recruited from April to June 2019. Interviews were conducted through July and August, 2019. I met with participants for about one hour and asked them 14 open-ended questions. I recorded the interviews and had them transcribed by someone else. I sent the transcribed interviews to participants in September.

For the purposes of my own research, I used CDA as my method of coding because it is best suited to examining where power lies within the interview transcript (Orlowski, personal communication, Jan. 10, 2019). According to van Dijk (1993), “critical discourse analysts [should] take an explicit sociopolitical stance” (p. 252). Critical discourse analysis requires that I take a side when examining transcribed interviews. I am politically progressive in my views and have no trouble pointing out when the discourses maintained White power through ideology and the framing of issues. When examining transcribed interviews, I critically analyzed the discourses to determine if thoughts, beliefs, and statements made were the result of racism, as well as language was used to dismantle power and racism. I looked for power in the system, in the perceptions and words of participants. I also analyzed the thoughts of the participants around the importance of Treaty Education. I scrutinized the ideology of the teachers who participated as well as their views on imposed restrictions from a political ideology of the government of the day. From a more positive perspective, I also discovered the many ways that teachers are dismantling power through discourse with students.



To code my data, I started by creating themes from the interview questions. When I read through the transcript from each participant I recorded their ideas into the themes I had created from the interview questions. Sometimes the participants would express an idea that created a new theme in my data. When new themes emerged, I started a new section on my data chart. There were times where one theme needed to be split into two themes as the data emerging started to fall into two distinct categories. For example, when thinking about the OTC Treaty kit, participant thoughts fell into two categories, the positives about the kit and the negatives. When I noticed the data emerging into categories, I created a subcategory to capture the variety of thoughts expressed. There were times when one interview question resulted in three or four subthemes.

While coding the data into themes I continued to critically analyze the systems that were in place to maintain power. As thoughts about power occurred to me I would discuss them with my supervisor, Dr. Paul Orlowski to get his perspective. Considering the literature on liberal forms of multicultural education versus anti-racist pedagogy helped me to critically analyze the power structures that are in place to maintain white supremacy. The work of Mackey (2002), St. Denis (2007), (2009), (20011), and Schick (2012) also informed my ability to critically analyze the data looking for how power is held within the education system, while specifically focused on Treaty Education.

I also checked in with my participants to make sure I understood their thoughts and views. There were times when a participant would mention a program that they were a part of that I was not familiar with. Upon further research on a program like Following their Voices, I would check in with participants to ensure that I had interpreted their thoughts correctly. While coding and writing about the data, I messaged participants for increased clarity so I could accurately represent their views.

### **3.3.1 Logistics**

Each participant was interviewed by me in a one-on-one format. As the researcher, I traveled to meet with the educators in their home cities and provided them with the questions to be asked. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by someone I hired. Transcriptions were shared with the participants. All data was collected in a confidential and anonymous manner and will remain both confidential and anonymous. I emailed each participant a copy of their transcript

and asked them if they wanted me to add, delete, or change anything. I received a reply from four of 11 participants, one of whom asked me to make a few changes.

### **3.3.2 Ethics**

I received approval for this study from the University of Saskatchewan in June 2019. Pseudonyms for all participants and their schools were used. The participants of this study will remain confidential. Due to the fact that I am looking at how White power is maintained; it is important that the individuals and schools cannot be identified. Underlying this study, is my position that the production of power within the system is important to understand.

### **3.4 Summary**

Critical discourse analysis gives us a tool that allows us to critique the power systems that are in place so that they can be dismantled. It is necessary to understand how teachers perceive power systems and teach their students about them. Critical examination is necessary to understand how we can improve our skills as antiracist educators. Examining how language is used to maintain or dismantle power for the dominant group is essential if we are to work towards an anti-oppressive existence for Indigenous people.

There is much to be learned by speaking with teachers invested in Treaty Education within Saskatchewan. Through the interviews of 11 dedicated teachers we can learn where teachers are successful or challenged with issues around Treaty Education such as resources, professional development, racism and resistance. My intent is that this research will give insight into areas where Treaty Education has been successful thus far, and to shine a light on where more resources, supports, and professional development is necessary.

## **Chapter 4 Relevant Data and Themes**

### **4.1 Overview**

There is a great deal to be learned from the teacher participants who are passionate and engaged in Treaty Education. In this next section I will outline the data that was collected and how it was coded into themes. I will share teacher views on the importance of Treaty Education, the areas where teachers feel successful, the barriers they encounter, and where teachers are locating resources. Teacher thoughts on the OTC Treaty Education kit and changes they would like to see to make the kit easier to use are also included. Participants also offered their thoughts on curricular integration of Indigenous Knowledge systems, and human supports from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and division personnel. As well, the study includes participant thoughts on Treaty Education support from school-based administrators, professional development, and how teachers are teaching and power and privilege. Participants also opined on why some teachers are not yet engaged in Treaty Education.

### **4.2 Coding of the Data**

The qualitative data of the participants was coded into themes and sub-themes (see Table 4.1). Major themes were the perceived importance of Treaty Education, barriers to teacher Treaty Education, access to resources, the OTC Treaty Education kit, desired changes to the kit, professional development, incorporating Indigenous Knowledge systems into curriculum, and the role of administrators in supporting Treaty Education. I also asked participants to share their perspectives on how they are teaching about power and privilege and how their classrooms demonstrated their commitment to Treaty Education. As well, I asked teachers to describe how their physical classroom demonstrates that Indigenous students are valued and that their classroom would be safe for them. I also asked teachers to speculate about why some teachers are not yet engaged in Treaty Education.

Table 4.1 Data Coding with Themes and Sub Themes

Themes	Sub Themes	Sub Themes
The importance of treaty education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The importance to Indigenous people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The importance to White settlers</li> </ul>
Barriers to treaty education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Resources</li> <li>•Knowledge</li> <li>•Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•White settler resistance</li> <li>• Racism</li> <li>• Fear of making mistakes</li> </ul>
Locating and accessing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The OTC kit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School division access to resources</li> <li>•The internet</li> </ul>
The OTC Treaty Education kit and teacher usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How it is being used successfully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Why it is not being used</li> </ul>
Human supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Elders Knowledge and Keepers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Division supports like consultants and mentors</li> </ul>
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Treaty catalyst training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How treaty catalysts are used in schools</li> </ul>
Treaty Education across curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How teachers are successfully incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How teachers are struggling to successfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems into curriculum</li> </ul>
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student or parent resistance to Treaty Education</li> <li>•How teachers teach students about power and privilege</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How in-school administrators support Treaty Education</li> </ul>
The Ideal OTC kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Things to add</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Things to change or adjust</li> </ul>

Themes	Sub Themes	Sub Themes
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Creating a safe atmosphere for Indigenous students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•How the physical structure or decor of the class shows a value in Treaty Education</li> </ul>
Why some teachers do not value Treaty Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear</li> <li>•Lack of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of knowledge</li> </ul>

Research participants were asked to share their thoughts on five broad themes: the importance of Treaty Education, the OTC Treaty resources kit, barriers and successes, power, and environment. From interviews, it became evident that Treaty Education was thought to be vital to understanding Canada's history of colonization and that Treaty promises have gone unfulfilled. However, the OTC Treaty resource kit is thought to be outdated with scope and sequence issues, and these issues were mentioned by every participant. When I asked about the new supplemental material recently put out by the Ministry of Education and the OTC, most participants were not aware of its existence. Also, educators repeatedly raised concerns about time constraints as a significant barrier to meeting the demands of this work.

In the past decade education funding has not kept pace with enrolment growth and teachers are under increased pressure to fill gaps left in their own classrooms. Support roles have diminished, and classrooms have become more complex with fewer supports. Teachers do not have hours each day available to search for resources to meet Treaty lessons. A lack of time has become a significant barrier to Treaty Education.

In-school administrators are viewed as vital to supporting the mandate of Treaty Education. They have the ability to elevate or diminish the work of Treaty Education as they set priorities in schools. Racism and resistance are still factors that educators must overcome as Treaty Education offers counter hegemonic narratives. Educators have a strong desire to incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems but feel unsupported in resources and professional development.

### 4.3 Teacher Views on the Importance of Treaty Education

Educators were asked to express their thoughts on the importance of Treaty Education. For White-settler educators, teaching predominantly White-settler students, Treaty Education was thought to be important because students were learning the true history of Canada. Veteran teachers explained that Treaty Education was history that they never learned in school. For many of the veteran educators, Treaty Education offered a shocking counter narrative to what they had grown up believing. Treaty Education was seen to be a key factor in combating misconceptions and racism.

Educators who identified as Indigenous and worked predominantly with Indigenous students saw Treaty Education as integral to their students' understanding of history and the impacts of ongoing colonization. In contrast to the White-settler teachers, Indigenous teachers said that Treaty Education was important so that students understood that they had Treaty rights that had gone unfulfilled. They also saw Treaty Education as a way to show their students that they had value and should be proud of who they are.

Here are some of the thoughts of Indigenous teacher-participants who believe that Treaty Education is important for Indigenous students so that they can understand the true history of Canada, as well as their rights as Treaty people. Samantha is First Nations and teaches grade 12 at a band school.

Samantha: I'm passionate about Treaty Education because we need to empower our youth. For the past 150 years, they've been treated like they were criminals. They're judged. They feel that they're lesser than. For me, being not only a teacher, but I'm the mom of two Indigenous kids, it's really important for them to understand who they are in this country. For me, that's everything.

Understanding the colonial history helps Indigenous youth contextualize the ongoing effects of colonization like racism and poverty. It helps them to understand that they have value.

For other Indigenous educators, Treaty Education is an important step in helping their Indigenous students understand their rights. Christina is Métis and teaches grades 10 to 12.

Christina: I think it's very important for them to understand what are basically their rights, because they're going through so many things. Struggles, addictions, social issues and a lot of that is due to the history of residential schools. I think by

teaching them the history of where First Nations started, the histories of treaties, and even that they existed before Europeans arrived, and how important they are in relationships. I think if they can understand that, then maybe they can gain a sense of pride within themselves about where their family comes from, who they are, and why things are the way they are today.

Christina believes that it will be beneficial if youth can gain an understanding of how the history has impacted them and their families. Developing an understanding of history helps Indigenous youth gain a sense of pride.

Another belief held by First Nations and Métis educators is that Treaty Education is important because Indigenous students deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Angela is an Indigenous perspectives coach and a high school educator.

Angela: I see the discrimination, the racism that's occurred over the years, and I understand the history. I feel that it's time to help bring about positive change. First Nations people, Indigenous peoples, deserve to be looked at as equals and treated fairly. We have to educate our Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to bring forth positive change and to help change people's mindsets.

Additionally, Treaty Education is seen a positive step towards helping combat racism and discrimination.

For non- Indigenous educators working primarily with Indigenous children, Treaty Education is seen as important for understanding that obligations made under the treaties have not been fulfilled. James is a White-settler high school teacher explained why he is passionate about Treaty Education.

James: I'm passionate about teaching Treaty Education because the Treaty was signed on this territory that we live in, and I feel like what was signed and agreed upon has not been carried out properly. So, I think morally, ethically, and within our education system, I've got a job to teach about those treaties.

Several non-Indigenous educators also expressed that they did not grow up learning about this history. They feel they have a moral duty to teach their students the truth.

For the non-Indigenous teachers, teaching Treaty Education is important because they feel that the history has been hidden from White-settler Canadians. Many expressed frustrations over

not knowing that residential schools, the 60's scoop, and the Indian Act were used as tools for cultural genocide. For White-settler teachers, Treaty Education is an important tool in combating racism, racism that they were previously blind to. Morgan, a White-settler middle years teacher, said she believes that Treaty Education is important for the White-settler population.

Morgan: I grew up in a community that was fairly racist, and I think I was blind to it while I was younger. It wasn't until I was older that I learned a lot of the history, that it became obvious to me that there was a lot more that needed to be uncovered. People need to know these things for anything to change. The only way to have a better future in Saskatchewan is to do something regarding that.

Learning about the treaties, what was promised, and what actually occurred is an important step to understanding the ramifications of our history for Indigenous peoples.

For the most part, all teachers agreed that Treaty Education is a positive step in moving towards a more just and equal society. Depending on the group of students a teacher works with and their own background, their reasons for seeing this work as vital varied. According to teachers in this study: for Indigenous children, Treaty Education is seen as a way to help students know their rights, and to feel pride in who they are. For White-settler students, Treaty Education is important for understanding the past and how it impacts the present. It is seen as the key to ending racism.

## **4.4 Barriers to Treaty Education**

### **4.4.1 Time to locate and create resources**

Educators experience many barriers to teaching Treaty Education. Time was the barrier most often mentioned. The time needed to locate, read, comprehend, sort through, create, and align to curriculum was seen as one of the biggest barriers. Research participants reported that they are not able to find what they need in the OTC Treaty resource kit and are forced to spend hours looking for resources to supplement the topics they are teaching. Other barriers included lack of student-friendly resources, financial costs, access to Elders and Knowledge Keepers, lack of ability to integrate content into all areas of curriculum, fear, resistance, and the structure of the school system.



Time is perceived to be a major factor educators face when meeting the mandate of Treaty Education. Overwhelmingly, teachers feel that the time required to locate, read, and create student resources is one of their greatest challenges. Participants in Saskatchewan are feeling that demands on their time have dramatically increased in the last decade, and many feel overworked. Angela is an Indigenous perspectives coach within her school division. She locates resources and models the teaching of Indigenous knowledge systems with teachers in her school division. Angela addressed the time constraints that teachers face:

Angela: The truth is teachers don't have time to go and create something that they can share with students. So, what I'm finding is that teachers are avoiding using the [OTC Treaty Education] kit. I think that in a lot of schools it's just sitting on a shelf in a library collecting dust. I think those that are really really passionate about Treaty Education, they're using it, or they're going online to find their own resources to use. And then those who don't really see the importance of Treaty Education, I think they're skipping over it and they're not teaching it at all.

Angela spoke to one of the frustrations with the OTC Treaty resource kit. It has valuable information for teachers, but nothing that teachers can take and use with students. Almost everything in the kit needs to be rewritten into student-friendly language. An important point that Angela makes is that teachers who are very committed to Treaty Education struggle to find the time to do this work. Teachers who do not view Treaty Education as important are likely not willing to take any time to do this work of creating student-friendly materials. At worst, teachers who do not agree with the mandate of Treaty Education or are racist will use the lack of time and the lack of student-friendly resources as an excuse not to do this valuable work.

#### **4.4.2 Knowledge**

Treaty Education is to be infused into the entire curriculum. When asked about how teachers are infusing Treaty content into all areas of the curriculum, teachers said that this was a challenge. Gabe, a White-settler high school teacher addressed this challenge.

Gabe: It's easy for me as a history teacher. And it's also directly in the curriculum. But I think about other disciplines, science, and math and to Indigenize those curriculums takes a lot of imagination, and I don't think teachers have the skill sets to do so. So, any resources in the Treaty kit that could help teachers be as practical as possible in imagining how to do Treaty Education ... other than tokenistic choices.

Some teachers interviewed believe that teachers are attempting to do the work of embedding Treaty content into curricular areas, but that it is difficult work for educators. Claire is a White-settler high school teacher. She explained that she would like someone to show her how to embed Indigenous knowledge systems.

Claire: So, it's tough when it's something we're supposed to do in with everything else. I kind of wish that someone could show how to embed it better. Instead of just saying, there's the Treaty outcome for each grade level. Well, I'd love for somebody to say 'here's some ideas to embed that into English, or science, or art, or...' because I'm sure people are doing it, but it'd be nice to know what people are doing.

Generally, some areas were seen as a natural fit, such as Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Arts Education. However, other content areas like Maths were seen to be quite challenging. Participants want student-friendly resources to help with content integration.

#### **4.4.3 Financial Barriers**

Another perceived barrier for educators was access to Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The financial cost of paying honorariums was a challenge for teachers. Some felt that their administrator would help with the expense if access to an Elder or knowledge keeper was deemed to be of value. In school divisions that have Elders and Knowledge Keepers as part of their support teams, access was limited due to high demand. Some teachers expressed concerns that these support people were getting burned out by the high demands on their time. In high schools, budgets for some departments are fairly small, and bringing in an Elder or knowledge keeper on the budget of the Social Studies department, for example, was not possible. Angela raised this concern.

Angela: There's always money for Phys Ed at our school. There's always money. Okay, so you're focusing on PD, I just wanna focus on Indigenous perspectives, like bringing in resource people. Bringing in Elders in our division, we will pay 75 dollars a half day, 150 dollars for a full day. We cover mileage, if they're coming from out of town. We feed them lunch, if they're here for a full day, and we provide tobacco. All of that has to come from schools. It can't come from the division. Now that I'm part of the social studies department, going into fall, I asked what our budget was. We have a 400-dollar budget. That 400 dollars has to cover the cost of our pens, pencils, if we have to get a staple, paper,

textbooks, y'know if you wanted to buy a book resource. So, it's ridiculously small, whereas Phys Ed seems endless.

In the current era of tax cuts, money in education will be in short supply. That said, budgets do show the priorities on an organization. Participants want to be doing this work, and they want to have Elders lead the way. It raises the question about how much of a priority Indigenous knowledge systems and Treaty Education are for school divisions within the province of Saskatchewan.

#### **4.4.4 White-Settler Resistance**

Resistance to learning about Treaty Education was also perceived to be a barrier. This resistance came in the form of parents who questioned or pushed back on Treaty content. Sometimes teachers feel that parental influence when they are covering Treaty Education content.

Morgan: I think some of the barriers for Treaty Education stems from generational difference. A lot of the parents of kids who are in school right now learning this information, they didn't have this education, so they're stuck in more old-fashioned ideas. Or racist ideas, without realizing it. Then those ideas get passed onto the kids, and I find it hard to get past that. The information being handed down is one of the barriers for sure.

Racism is learned, and Morgan believes that parents are teaching their children racist views. These views become barriers to the learning.

James has also faced resistance from students. He believes that it stems from students learning something that their parents never learned.

James: It starts with students usually, but I think it also comes from a different worldview at home. The students are getting two different messages. That seemed to be the biggest challenge that I've had. The student come to school and say, "That's not important, that's not what my parents think is right, or is what happened." That's the biggest challenge.

Perceiving parental resistance through students can be daunting for teachers who worry about confrontations and backlash. These moments are tense for teachers who question what they are covering and if they will be supported in the face of a parental challenge. For James, he felt lucky

to have the support of the Indigenous Student Advocate. That person's job is to represent Indigenous students when there is a conflict between an Indigenous student and a teacher. James went to her for advice on how to deal with parental push back. She advised him to phone the students' parent.

James: So, I went to the Indigenous Advocate and asked, "How would I handle this?" She said, "I experience this all the time. Why don't you call the parents? So, I went back up and called the parents right away. And just opening up those discussions. And soon as you open up the discussion, sometimes they're difficult, and you just start to listen and hear the point of view and give a few simple reasons for why you're doing it. Real basic. Don't try to go into the depths of Treaty Education, but reasons why learning different world views, cultures, and ways of life are important. It slowly starts to break down.

In this scenario, James was able to diffuse the pushback with dialogue and explanation. In some situations, this is not always the case. He explains a time when a student resisted so strongly that they refused to attend school.

James: But with one student, in particular, they became so resistant, stopped coming to class. Didn't wanna learn about Treaty, didn't want to learn about what happened on this land. That was history class. So, then we had to get the parents in, have a meeting with admin and the Indigenous Student Advocate. In this case, with the support of administration and others, the student was able to return to school.

Participants also described that another form of resistance to Treaty Education is students' complaints. Sometimes students complain that they have already learned Treaty Education material and wonder why they have to continue learning the same thing every year.

Morgan: I think a big obstacle, specifically at [her school] is the feeling that there is too much. They're tired of learning about it. But when I ask them basic questions about it, they can't answer them. So, on the one hand, they're saying 'oh, we don't want to learn about this anymore,' but on the other hand when I ask them basic questions, they don't know enough. They're still fighting with the knowledge. They don't have the knowledge to make decisions. But, for us to reach the goal of Treaty Education, we're not there.

It would be easy to dismiss the students' complaints as ordinary— students complain often about having to learn about a variety of topics. However, these complaints should not be dismissed so easily, as Morgan points out.

Morgan: I hate that it's their reaction. But it is a part of their experience that can't be ignored either. What's the perfect amount of learning about it, or the best way to learn about it, without it becoming something they're sick of hearing about? Because you don't want it to fall on deaf ears.

When asked if this may be happening because educators are teaching the same things over and over in different grades, Morgan mentioned that her students struggled with concepts around power and privilege. She thought that the issue was so important that it had to be tackled more than one time. She also spoke to the resourcing of Treaty Education and anti-oppressive education.

Morgan: I think anything that can be simplified, and we should avoid repetition in it. Make very easy, teacher ready things. Like copy this, here's a video, here's some questions to go with it. Just to make it really easy for people who are diving into it for the first time.

Morgan felt that the push back against Treaty content from students is not something that we should dismiss, but instead address to find a solution. As well, she points out that better resources will help teachers who want to teach Treaty Education but have yet to do so.

#### **4.4.5 Counter Hegemonic Narratives and White-Settler Resistance**

Participants working with White-settler students mentioned that the emotional work of understanding power and privilege was difficult for their students, especially White male students who at times were the most resistant. White fragility can be a barrier as Morgan points out.

Morgan: Maybe in high school, kids are just more ready to challenge the status quo, and to understand, and be more receptive to that. Who has power and why? Maybe in middle years it's the first time you're confronting them with this idea that the world isn't perfect, and the neighborhood we're in is a higher income level, a higher privilege level. And maybe it's just harder for them. They feel like the White guilt side.

Morgan expressed the frustration she felt around not being able to connect with her students on the issue of privilege. No matter how Morgan tried to address White privilege, she was met with resistance from her most vocal students. Even with 12 years of experience teaching she still felt like she struggled with this topic with the set of students. She said that even her students who did understand the concept were silent.

Morgan: There were quite a few of the students in the class who just didn't, couldn't grasp it. And the ones who were getting it, who were understanding it, were holding back from expressing their points of view, because the ones who were the loudest in the room were the ones who had the most negative reaction to it.

Confronting power and privilege with White-settler students was difficult for Morgan. Morgan said she felt that her knowledge and experience should have been enough, but still felt unable to make any headway with some of her resistant non-Indigenous students.

Gabe teaches at a private school. Many of his students have race and class privilege. He talked about how some students put up walls so that they did not have to hear or feel things.

Gabe: I had an intern working in my classroom this year, who has a Ph.D. in history. She was very grounded in social justice, and she had a student, a smart kid, but y'know, privileged White kid who is conservative and wants to push and debate, who brought up Jordan Peterson and she just ripped into him. We had to really talk about how we have to make space for this discourse. That reaction isn't gonna cause a student like that to rethink or challenge their ideas. So, we have to protect space for those kinds of opinions, as long as it's not outwardly hate speech, there's space to talk about it. So friendly debate is where I try to go. She struggled with him, because he is a bright kid.

JG: Do you find that after a while, other kids are challenging those ideas too?

Gabe: Yeah, as a teacher I'm low status, and a powerful kid like that is potentially quite high status. Like this is an outspoken, really bright kid. Who, he'll get a little gang of them, and they'll silently believe that. It can be dangerous. But again, me ripping him a new one isn't going to make him... it's gonna foster anger and it's not going to change his opinions. It's a balancing act.

When it was clear to me that he misunderstood the question, I rephrased and asked him about other students pushing against a dominating student with a strong opinion. He explained that his students are fairly engaged.

Gabe: But it's tricky and not something to be done without careful thought and consideration. Because it's a minefield too.

Gabe articulates the difficulty teachers face when navigating the issues of power and privilege with students who already have a lot of power and privilege. Many of Gabe's students have White privilege as well as class privilege. When talking about power and privilege he exclusively referenced his male students, so the students resisting the learning also had male privilege.

#### **4.4.6 New Canadians Resistance to Treaty Education**

Another barrier that teachers face is when newcomers to Canada take up the racism from the dominant groups. Morgan found it difficult to navigate the extra complication of having a student of African descent adding to the White-settler resistance that she faced in her classroom.

Morgan: I had one student who was of African descent, and he was like what about Black people all the time. And that was a really hard conversation piece to add to it, because he said Black people in the States never got any money as an apology to slavery.

Even though this pushback caught Morgan off guard, she attempted to try and connect with the students and use it as a teachable moment.

Morgan: He was bringing in a whole other side to it, and I'm trying not to take away from the things he has experienced. It was a really hard conversation to have because he kept bringing it back to that. So instead of talking about the experience of where things are at for First Nations people and learning about treaties and facts about treaties, he would just find a way to bring it back to either the money that they were being given as an apology for residential schools, or how it was the same for Black people in the states.

Morgan found this added an extra layer of complication that she struggled to navigate with her students.

#### 4.4.7 Schools Constraints

The Eurocentric structure of the school system was also perceived to be a barrier. From the ringing of the bells, the set-up of the classrooms, the time constraints on one-hour periods, to the demands of measurable learning, several high school teachers felt that the structure of the school system was a barrier. Participants want to Indigenize their classrooms, but they may share their classroom with other teachers, and are not able to change the placement of the desks. They may want to get out onto the land to learn from an Indigenous perspective, but the structure of the one-hour period is a barrier. Feeling pressured to teach to the test, and how knowledge is valued was also seen as a barrier. This challenge was felt most strongly by the high school educators. Claire mentioned the constraints of being able to do land-based education because of the block system her school works within. She explained that she can only do land-based education with specific sections because of the time of year "... not Native Studies, because I teach it in January and February, because we are on the block system" (Claire). To Claire, land-based education meant learning on the land and identifying native plants.

Gabe agreed that the structure of schools is one of the barriers.

Gabe: They're [barriers] based in the structure of schooling, in the super Eurocentric ways that the institution of school has come about. The bells, the disciplines, and the lack of holistic learning that schools, high schools especially, are grounded in. There tends to be a culture of students as vessels to which we are to impart our great knowledge to.

Life is not contained in neat boxes, yet high schools are set up so that subjects are in neat boxes of isolation. A seemingly small item like desk arrangement can be a barrier. High school classrooms are often shared between teachers and therefore physical set up can be a barrier.

Gabe: Yeah, it really stinks because it always goes to the lowest common denominator. Rows.

More complex drivers like standardized testing, lack of funding and austerity are also seen as barriers. Gabe expanded upon this.

Gabe: Then there's this weird governmental pressure, like austerity, lack of funding, class size. Then a desire for results. Saskatchewan doesn't do great in PISA testing, so there's a push for graduation rates to go up. Some of these pushes



come at the cost of having to give up some really meaningful space and time. Because you're pushing pushing pushing, which is a very Eurocentric way of looking at education.

Gabe shares an interesting perspective—in the push to raise Indigenous graduation rates, some schools may be pushing teachers into further colonizing their classrooms. As classroom sizes increase, teachers have less control over how they set up the physical seating in the room. Rows are often the only way to get a large number of students into a room. Also, large class sizes force teachers find efficiencies in how they teach, evaluate, and assess. For example, a bubble-dot test that can be put through a scanning machine for grading is certainly efficient, but it is an impersonal and Eurocentric form of assessment. This type of test may also be lacking in its ability to determine what a student actually knows and understands about a topic.

#### **4.5 Locating and Accessing Resources**

Three main themes emerged around where teachers are locating resources to support Treaty Education: Google, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and books provided by the school division. The OTC Treaty resource kit was not mentioned until I specifically asked about it. Locating Treaty Education resources was reported to be simultaneously difficult and easy. James articulated this well when he said.

James: I find them easy. I find it overwhelming how much there is. It's overwhelming to go through all the material and decide what is kinda at the proper level and ability for teaching the students. Especially grade nines and tens. So no, I don't find it difficult to find resources, but to go through it all, sort it, organize it, and kinda clarify it in my head. And what is appropriate for and meets the curriculum for those grade nines and tens, mostly English, social and history class.

While there are many resources available, sorting through them to determine their value to a specific topic and grade is an onerous and time-consuming task.

Google is the most common way that teachers find resources. However, many of the resources found on the internet must be vetted to be appropriate and adapted for local accuracy. Kelsey, a non-Indigenous, veteran middle years teacher articulated the challenge this poses for teachers.

Kelsey: Sometimes it's not Treaty appropriate, like it's written for treaties, [but] not [Treaty] number six. Or it's not Indigenous group appropriate.

Kelsey explained that there are many resources for learning about Coast Salish people, who live in British Columbia, but that those resources may not be appropriate for learning about Plains Cree people in Saskatchewan. So, while there is a vast amount of information available on the internet, finding resources for Saskatchewan, and more specifically for the Indigenous territory you're located within, is a challenge.

Participants want accurate information, and not having easy access to locally created content can create fear, as is explained by Claire when she speculated about how her colleagues feel.

Claire: I think the bigger thing is [teachers] don't want to do it wrong. They don't want to offend or teach it in a way where they'll get in trouble.

For teachers who are not familiar with Treaty Education, this may be a barrier to them meeting the mandate set out by government.

Kelsey also noted that other provinces were creating resources for their locale, but Saskatchewan has not.

Kelsey: Saskatchewan is super lacking. Learning Alberta has come out with some really awesome Treaty Education, and because they're covered by Treaty six, there's some really awesome resources. The Ministry of Education from BC has some as well.

It is noteworthy that Alberta has not mandated Treaty Education, yet they have provided teachers with accurate content.

Finding content that is at an appropriate reading level for students is also challenging. Claire, a high school teacher, explains how she believes the reading level needs to be even lower when students are learning new content.

Claire: Because when it's something most kids have very little knowledge of, when they don't have background knowledge, then you have to write it at [an] even lower reading level than the kids are at.

The difficulty with providing students with content from online sources is that it is often not written at the level that students can easily understand, especially for elementary students, and high school students who struggle with reading. It should also be noted that the Saskatchewan curriculum is written in a way that requires teachers to provide resources to their students for exploration. Verbs like analyze, assess, and investigate are commonly used in curriculum. These verbs tell teachers that students are to engage with the content.

Some school divisions have recognized the gap between curricular mandate and the resources made available to teachers. To remedy this, they have linked curriculum to content on their own websites. North East School Division has unpacked curricular outcomes and linked internet websites to the outcomes. It is still up to teachers to sift through the content and decide how to utilize the websites. Claire made reference to this school division's work, but she is not sure which division.

Claire: And I want to say Horizon School Division, has a whole section on treaties, where I've gotten ideas from. I don't know that I've used anything point blank off there, but I've gone to them and looked at what they've done.

The search for appropriate resources is time consuming and onerous work for committed teachers. This is a problem for Treaty Education because there are many teachers who do not have the level of commitment required to locate and adapt resources, and more importantly, the free time to do so.

Some teachers are using the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and the OTC website to source videos to meet curricular mandate. Participants reported being able to find good videos through APTN and CBC's 8th Fire series.

Morgan: I've used the CBC 8th Fire documentary series, and some of the videos that have been made by the OTC and stuff.

In personal communication with Morgan after her interview, she related a story to me about showing one of the 8th Fire documentaries. She explained that the documentary had very good content, but that there was a scene in the documentary involving strippers and drug use. While

this specific section in the documentary made her uncomfortable using the series in the classroom, she had to weigh the risk against the benefit. After previewing the video, she decided that the content was beneficial enough to outweigh the risk. However, providing teachers with the proper resources to share with students would free teachers from having to make choices that could be perceived to be inappropriate by parents or administrators.

Christine mentioned that she likes to use APTN documentaries.

Christine: APTN is a huge one. I love them for current events. They have First Contact, a really good program to use in the classroom. It really lit a fire under the students.

The OTC also has videos that teachers are accessing, however they felt that the videos were dated and were not always taken seriously by students.

Kelsey: The OTC, they have a video series that needs to be updated. They're blaaaand. They're not really exciting, they're not really contemporary, and don't get kids passionate about it. They're just too bland.

The ultimate goal is to engage students to learn about Treaty Education. Outdated videos can have the opposite effect.

Books and stories were viewed to be valuable. However, teachers said that the trouble was knowing what was out there and how to locate it. Teacher Librarians were once the go-to people to help find these resources for teachers, but due to funding cuts, these positions are now gone.

Kelsey: Nobody has a full-time teacher librarian anymore. So being able to find good websites, and reading materials, and articles and stuff that's relevant for the grades that I teach, and for the content that I want to cover [is a barrier].

In an era of tax cuts, Treaty Education is made more difficult by the cutting of human supports. Teachers are left to do this work on their own, without any additional time. With ever increasing demands on their time, it is becoming impossible for teachers to fill in all of the gaps left in the wake of continuous funding cuts.

## 4.6 The OTC Treaty Resource Kit and Teacher Perspectives

### 4.6.1 An Underused Resource

I asked teachers to talk about the OTC Treaty resource kit and how they were utilizing it in their own teaching practice. Generally, teachers are not using the kit, and if they are it is for a small part of the kit, like maps or a specific story. When teachers told me that they were not using the kit, I followed up by asking them why. Overwhelmingly teachers stated that the resource was not student friendly, and that it is hugely time consuming to go through.

Angela, who has half time release to be a Treaty Education support for her division, spoke about the Treaty kit in great detail. It has been her job to help in-service teachers about the OTC Treaty resource kit. She believes that the OTC kit is not being used because it is not student or teacher friendly.

Angela: The truth is teachers don't have time to go and create something that they can share with students. So, what I'm finding is that teachers are avoiding using the kit. I think in a lot of schools it's sitting on a shelf in a library collecting dust. I think those that are really really passionate about Treaty Education, they're using it, or they're going online to find their own resources to use. And then those who don't really see the importance of Treaty Education, I think they're skipping over it and they're not teaching it.

Angela further explained that much of the OTC Treaty resource kit does not align well with curriculum, and that teachers in high school are using the elementary resources to meet their curricular needs.

Angela: There's lots of good information in the grade 4 and five resources. I find there's lots of really good information in there that can be used for Native Studies in high school.

Claire, a high school teacher, also articulated that the entire OTC kit needed to be combed through to find resources for high school.

Claire: I found that I needed to go through not just the grade level I was teaching at, but I went down and found a great activity in I think the grade 4 book, that I've used for grade 10, 11, and 12.

She also added that the OTC Treaty resource kit is more informational for teachers than a resource that can be used with students.

Kelsey, a middle years teacher, also felt the OTC Treaty resource kit was meant to be a teacher resource, and not necessarily a student resource.

Kelsey: They're [OTC kit materials] more to give me, the teacher, the information I need to teach about treaties. It's really for teaching me, and I didn't need that. It's something that's super important, so I'm willing to put in the time. Whereas, I think lots of teachers are like screw this, it's too much work".

Morgan, also a middle years teacher, agreed with Kelsey. She also felt that the entire kit has a lot of great information.

Morgan: So, I have found some resources in the kit. I think sometimes I've found that some of the information in the kit is too wordy, or heavy in language for kids to understand. So, I might use it to inform myself before I pass it on to them. I have to make it more user friendly.

Morgan also pointed out that this is one reason why the OTC kit is likely not being used.

Morgan: That's the downfall of it. I'm a person who feels passionate about Treaty Education and wants to teach it. If I feel like I need to dig into it, it's gonna be that much harder for somebody who isn't that excited about teaching it in the first place.

Overall, teachers largely agreed with each other in their thoughts and feelings about the OTC kit and how cumbersome and time consuming it is to use the kit with students.

There were positive aspects of the OTC kit that were mentioned too. Angela mentioned the Treaty Essential Toolkit- "I use it all the time as my little bible... just so you can understand the timeline" (Angela). Participants felt that the content in the kit was good information, especially for teachers who do not have much knowledge on treaties. The website is easily accessible, and the videos are felt to be valuable. There are books and posters in the kit that are considered to be worthwhile to use in the classroom.

To summarize a few more of the thoughts of passionate Treaty Education teachers, many felt that the resource was not student friendly. They also feel that the information in the kit is

intended for teachers to use for their own information. Some believe that the books and videos are now outdated. Several teachers mentioned that the Treaty kit does not align well with social studies curriculum and one mentioned that it was not organized by themes. Participants expressed frustration with having to take a lot of time to go through the resource, and then needing further time to create student activities, and information at the level of their students.

## **4.7 An Ideal OTC Treaty Resource Kit**

### **4.7.1 Student Friendly Information and Activities**

Participants had a wish list of items that they would like to see in an ideal Treaty Education kit. The most commonly mentioned items were student friendly resources and hands on activities that are engaging for students. They want a resource to help them break away from colonial Eurocentric ways of teaching and covering Treaty content.

The ideal resource would have a backgrounder for the teacher, but also background information for the student. Resources written at the level for the students they are intended for was brought up by nearly every teacher I interviewed. Many high school teachers mentioned that they use the elementary portion of the Treaty kit to find resources for their students. Therefore, there is an issue around scope and sequence of the OTC kit content.

Participants also expressed a desire to have an activity or discursive strategy attached to the lesson so that they engage students better in the learning. Tanya mentioned that she would like to see something like the blanket exercise or the Alien Act<sup>6</sup> added to the kit.

Tanya: The blanket exercise, the alien act, things like that. Those are probably the most valuable because they get kids into it and interacting. If there can be more resources like that, where they have to role-play, or take part instead of sitting and listening to me lecture [or] watching videos.

<sup>6</sup> The Alien Act is a Treaty simulation where students sign an agreement that they cannot read nor understand because it is in the language of the visiting alien. The teacher is often the translator for the visiting guest who plays the role of an alien.

Participants want engaging activities that help students connect to the content so that they can care more deeply about what they are learning.

#### **4.7.2 Streamline Scope and Sequence**

Several participants specifically mentioned that they would like to see more “Land-based” activities to help them integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into areas of the curriculum. Kelsey said that it would be great to have different aspects of Land-based<sup>4</sup> learning in a digital resource kit. The intent of this resource would be to give teachers suggestions and ideas for learning that can be done on the Land and with the Land. Many teachers feel that they want to break away from Eurocentric styles of teaching and learning, but do not know what to actually do when they are out on the land.

As well, having a list of activities or sites available within different regions of the province was mentioned and thought to be beneficial. As Claire explained, many teachers are not aware of what is available locally.

Claire: Well, the only place that we go, it’s not land-based, but the Duck Lake Museum. It’s awesome for Native Studies 10. If there’s any teachers that teach anywhere near Duck Lake, that’s the museum they should go to. The bottom half, there’s four units in Native Studies 10, and the four corners are those four... and I don’t think they did it on purpose, but I waked in and went, “Oh my gosh, it’s my curriculum.” That’s a little plug for them. We go every year.

JG: I didn’t know that. That’s good to know.

Claire: Well the reason I found out about Duck Lake, a different teacher during summer, had to pee, and stopped to pee at the Duck Lake Museum, and went, “I wonder if Claire knows about this.” And I said, no I don’t, and I said maybe we’ll go, and I did. Now I’m hooked. If I taught in Duck Lake, we’d go there five or six times during the course of the class, because you can go there for each section.

It is often through word of mouth that teachers learn of great opportunities around them. Having an easy to access list of areas and sites that can be accessed to meet Treaty Education goals would be helpful.

Gabe envisioned that an updated resource would set out activities that can be done in local regions. For example, in Regina students can visit an unmarked mass grave that was used to bury residential school children. Many teachers do not know that this site exists, and there are many



more historic sites and places within our province that could be better utilized by teachers if they knew of their existence. Linking different regions' place-based activities to outcomes would be very helpful.

Participants would like to see the kit organized by themes and not just grades. They would also like to see the entire resource available online so that it is not heavy and hard to lug around.

Tanya: It's kind of cumbersome. If I could just go on the internet and access the link. Well, [also] maybe categorized by topic, not by grade.

Tanya explained that she teaches worldview to her grade 12 students, but she finds the grades one to three resources helpful depending upon the reading level of her students.

Stories are thought to be a great way to develop empathy and compassion, and teachers want to have easy access to stories that help them cover the concepts in their curriculum. James expressed that he finds storytelling the better way to go about teaching, but that it is time consuming to accumulate those stories.

James: To accumulate those stories and that knowledge takes a lot of time, and I can't just go into the kit and get those stories. I gotta sit down with Elders and people that have learned them.

Gabe agreed with James when he said, "history, humanizing the history is such an important thing for fostering empathy in kids" (Gabe). Having a digital resource bank of stories that are organized by themes, and include photos, and perhaps even videos, would be beneficial in helping teachers to humanize history.

A way of knowing the correct protocol for their area is another desire expressed by some educators. There appeared to be two camps on this idea though. Educators who had been told by an Elder not to worry about protocol too much as long as they were doing the teaching from their heart, did not seem to be as focused on getting the protocol correct. For some educators not knowing if they had the correct protocol caused a sense of fear and reservation over covering the content and getting it wrong. Claire illustrated this sentiment.

Claire: I think the biggest thing is people just not wanting to do it wrong so they

avoid it. Because they don't feel they know it, and they don't wanna offend, or do this thing, or teach it in such a way that they'll get in trouble.

Participants more concerned with following the correct protocol wanted to see a list or a section on the website where they could look up this information. Some research participants weren't as concerned about protocol because they had been reassured by an Elder that it was okay to mess up on protocol, especially when a teacher is trying to do the right thing and didn't have the knowledge needed to know the protocol.

Several teachers mentioned that they would like to see better content alignment with the Treaty outcomes and the curriculum. It was mentioned by a few that the Treaty content does not fit into curriculum and so it is another add on.

Kelsey: I'd really like the resources to match our curriculum. Because right now, if you look at the Treaty Education kit by grade, the supplemental booklets, they have by grade. The outcomes for Treaty Education don't match any of the outcomes for that year's social studies.

Gabe also believed that the OTC kit does not align with curriculum: "If I look at it, the OTC outcomes, the Treaty outcomes, they're disconnected from curriculum, largely. There is not a direct [connection]" (Gabe). When teachers view the Treaty Education outcomes as being out of sync with the curriculum, they may be less likely to cover the content because they don't see places to naturally integrate, and it may be seen as an add on.

#### **4.7.3 Authentic Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

Morgan illustrated the problem that teachers face when the integration of curriculum and Indigenous Ways of Knowing do not align well.

Morgan: One of the ways we go wrong with Treaty Education is [when] we're teaching curriculum, then pause, now we're going to have a First Nations moment. [Laughs] I think kids don't respond well to that either. It feels corny to them, and probably feels corny to the people teaching it too. So, any time it can be integrated really naturally, as look, this is wisdom pulled from this culture, it's a more natural way.

Morgan suggested that when the integration of Indigenous Ways of Knowing is a more natural fit, like through novels and art, it is more powerful.

Morgan: ...Those are powerful ways that it can be integrated, but I think we have to be careful about which resources we chose, and how it's being taught, and the prep work, and the stuff that goes into it. Because I can see it going a different way as well, with some of those. Things like, [residential schools] if somebody was to trivialize the experience.

Having curriculum and Treaty content better aligned would help teachers make the integration of Indigenous Ways of Knowing more authentic and meaningful.

#### **4.7.4 Digital Picture Files**

Tanya said that an online picture file organized by themes would be a helpful tool in allowing students to see what it actually looked like pre-contact up until now. It was also mentioned by several teachers that a historic timeline would be helpful. Perhaps something like this already exists, but the fact that teachers would ask for this does speak to how time consuming and onerous it is for educators to locate resources.

#### **4.7.5 Play Based Resources**

Susan would like to see a kit with items in it that can be passed around and put on display in the classroom. She also wants to see a parent resource made available that Pre-K teachers can share at their parent engagement nights. She also pointed out that Pre-K teachers have a parent engagement night and it is a really great opportunity to let parents know what children will learn in k-12 on Treaty Education:

Susan: Just the fact that it's not mandatory<sup>7</sup>, that we don't have really specific resources, but we have a really good opportunity. Especially for parent contact.

For Susan, it was really important for her to voice that Pre-K is a great place for teachers to start engaging with parents on Treaty Education. Treaty Education is not mandated for Pre-K.

<sup>7</sup> Treaty Education is not mandatory for Pre-Kindergarten, however, it is for K-12 education.

#### **4.7.6 Online Access and Organization**

Overall, teachers want to have digital resources that are organized and easily accessible. Cross referencing content by themes and grades would certainly be helpful. Creating content that teachers can give directly to their students would be a huge time saver. Having resources that are vetted for accuracy and are locally relevant would also be hugely helpful. Hands on activities and land-based activities that are easy to follow are desired by teachers who feel that they just don't know how to break out of the box they themselves were educated in. Many of the teachers participants want to humanize history, and they want stories to share with their students. Having a list of books that a school may or may not have, is another barrier to getting these stories into the classroom. Physical story kits in every school, or digital resources would help teachers to have one less task to accomplish. Lastly, teachers need resources that their students can read and understand. For example, the curriculum directs teachers to have students investigate historical figures and there should be resources provided that students can read at their own level.

#### **4.8 Human Supports and Professional Development**

Many of the teachers interviewed had taken the OTC Treaty resource kit training years ago. Seven out of 11 teachers interviewed had taken Treaty catalyst training. For educators with an interest in social justice the Treaty catalyst training fueled their interest.

Mary: I like human and social justice issues. We didn't know about the 60s scoop, and I had no idea my whole life that that had happened under our nose in this country. Our school division [called for] Treaty catalyst teachers and was looking for people. I answered and went for the training.

For some, it was this education that sparked a sense of obligation to teach Treaty Education to their students. Several indicated that the Treaty catalyst training led them on a journey to further their education and to care more deeply.

Human supports were highly valued, but accessing those human resources is getting more difficult as a result of reduced funding, and cuts to these positions. Elders and Knowledge Keepers were viewed as critical to ensuring that information shared is correct for the region.

Mary: It's really important, because if you don't have that cultural knowledge, you're shooting in the dark. You might not be culturally appropriate.

For Mary, and a few other teachers interviewed, fear of not having the correct information or protocol was a concern. Encouragement from Elders and Knowledge Keepers seems to give teachers the confidence to do the work of Treaty Education.

Educators also expressed that bringing in an Elder is expensive and that school budgets just don't seem to be able to do this very often anymore. There were also concerns expressed over how few of these people we have in our divisions, and how busy they are. Concerns were raised about burning these people out due to the sheer demand that they are under.

Susan: Some resource people are spread pretty thin. I've made lots of requests and didn't receive much time. But I haven't really had much training. And like I said, yeah, the things that I'm doing for Treaty Education, I'm kinda just doing on my own.

Susan also goes on to explain that many teachers feel uncomfortable teaching Treaty Education. Human supports can help put teachers at ease with the content.

The blanket exercise was noted for its ability to bring history to life and to create a concrete understanding of the true history of Canada. When combating White fragility, this may be a non-threatening way to tackle issues for some less progressive teachers.

Seven of the eleven participants also feel that land-based education is valuable, but that PD for teachers is difficult to get into because it is not offered very often, and the space is limited:

Kelsey: It's super rare and really hard to get into. They might offer one or two sessions every year. But then it's like, we have 25 spots. When you have thousands of teachers, it's kind of hard to get everyone in.

8        The College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan has EFDT 313/315 to address land-based education. These classes are mandatory.

Some of the teachers interviewed were formally trained in Following their Voices. Two of the participants were leaders in this initiative in their school. James stated that this program has been highly effective in making him an all-around better teacher.

James: Yeah. And it's changed the way I teach! I think I find self-reflective teaching - like teachers are way more reflective now. About every day. Usually we don't have time to sit back after each lesson and go, 'okay, how did that go?' but now you're forced to, with another person. So, you see, teachers are trying different strategies.

When I asked James if he felt FTV was having a positive impact on students, he asserted that it most definitely was.

A few teachers had also taken training to become Dream Catcher Coaches. This is a program that helps students to set and reach their own goals. Also, several educators have had post-secondary classes in anti-racism or critical race theory. These classes have helped them to gain a better understanding of power, privilege and racism. Ideally, these programs would be expanded and would include all teachers in the province of Saskatchewan.

## **4.9 Curriculum Integration**

English language arts and social studies are seen as the most natural places to integrate Treaty Education content. Teachers are able to use short stories, poems, and novels to cover historic content while creating empathy and compassion. Research participants, who are middle years teachers, felt that social studies were a natural fit to teach the history of the colonization of Canada.

Middle years teachers did mention that infusing Indigenous world view into science was done well in the Pearson science textbooks. I did not interview any high school science teachers, so I do not have a sense of how content is being covered in grades nine to 12.

A few teachers mentioned that they were teaching the medicine wheel in health and physical education as a way of helping students to find a balance in their lives. Arts education is another area where teachers find that they can infuse Indigenous content through covering artists. A new drama curriculum was just created for high school, and there was a concerted effort to

bring in Indigenous worldview. However, Gabe, a drama major, indicated that infusing content into drama was more difficult. Gabe explained:

Gabe: I'm still learning on that; it takes a bigger leap of imagination to address the FNMI outcomes in drama, than in history. I'm gonna get better at it, it's actually a professional goal of mine to work on it. There's a lot of debate at the curriculum writing level about how far we can push teachers to do this work. We wrote an outcome that was a FNMI outcome, about getting students to adopt perspectives of the other— so exploring the voices of the marginalized. A lot of pushback from the pilot teachers around whether that's appropriate, whether students should be taking on roles of marginalized people, or exploring perspectives in that way, given, yes cultural sensitivity, cultural appropriation. That kinda thing, it's kinda a minefield.

Gabe's views on the drama curriculum and infusing Indigenous content seem to make the issue overly complicated. I am left wondering about the availability of plays written by Indigenous peoples and why students are not asked to view, read, and discuss this body of work.

Overall there was a sense that teachers want to infuse Treaty Education content across curricula, but they are not sure how. Some of them felt that they were limited by time to find the resources needed. Others felt that they were limited by their own creativity and imagination.

#### **4.10 Leadership**

For the most part participants viewed their current administrators as supportive of Treaty Education. Mary explained how her in-school administrator supported her work:

Mary: They're right there. Supporting, having Elders come out. This year we had a new administration and they were very interested in getting the kids to have different presenters come out that we haven't had in our school. Very supportive.

Bringing in speakers was seen as one way to support the work of Treaty Education.

Participants also expressed that they felt that administrators were supportive of Treaty Education when they backed them up to parents. James related a story of a former administrator not backing him up to parents. When I asked him if this made him want to back off of teaching about Treaty Education he said, "Yeah, I did. Probably not consciously, but just, 'Aw, man, how am I gonna ask for this? How are we going to do this?'" (James). James expressed the internal

conflict that teachers feel when they worry that an in-school administrator does not support their work.

As well, a few teachers stated that their administrator supports Treaty Education by telling parents that the teacher is covering curriculum. For other teachers, support was experienced as allowing teachers to attend professional development, purchasing resources, allowing teachers and students to take part in ceremonies, like powwow, and land acknowledgment. Several teachers did indicate that this support was initiated by the teachers themselves.

However, even supportive administration was constrained by finances, due to tax cuts and recent austerity budgets. Gabe explained this when he says:

Gabe: Our admin is receptive to a point. They like to do a lot of in-house PD.  
They don't like to spend a lot of money bringing in outside facilitators.

Gabe further explained that he is often asked to do the PD for his school because of his interest in Treaty Education. He did suggest this was problematic, and that they need to "bring in more skilled people" (Gabe).

Educators reported that in schools where the administrator does not set a clear focus on Treaty Education, only pockets of teachers who care are doing this work.

Morgan: You need to have an admin that's really passionate and feels strongly about it, for it to become a priority in the school. At the school [I'm at], I dunno if there's not much, maybe because there isn't a high First Nations population. Is that why it isn't? Like I know some people do a really good job of it, and some people don't do it at all.

She further added that Treaty Education can be made a priority:

Morgan: I think there needs to be more time made for it, through staff meetings, and staff... but I'm not sure what the real answer to that is.

Morgan was not alone as others felt that an administrator had the ability to make Treaty Education a priority in their school.



Participants shared that teachers wanting to do this work want to feel supported by their administrator. Mary explained that when covering Treaty content, she runs her plans past her administrator and asks for advice before proceeding.

Mary: I've never really had parents come at me, though I've heard stories about parents being upset. I usually work with my administration before I teach something, and I ask if there's anything they think I should communicate.

Mary wants to know if she is doing this work correctly, and that her administrator will back her if there are any parental challenges.

Administrators have the power to set the tone and direction within their building. They have the ability to make Treaty Education a priority and elevate the work that teachers are doing. In addition, teachers need to feel that their administrator supports the work that they are doing and will back them up when parents have concerns. Administrators also have the power to set a focus for professional development in their schools, and to set budgets. Having the ability to have a bird's eye view of their school, administrators could help teachers share human supports as a cost saving measure.

#### **4.11 Power and Privilege**

Given that one of the goals of Treaty Education is to create a more equal and just society for Indigenous peoples, it was important for me to ask questions about power and privilege and how teachers are handling issues that arise around racism, White power, and the systems that function to maintain White power. Some of the teachers interviewed could not recall taking an anti-racism anti-oppressive class. A few research participants seemed to struggle to understand what I meant by power and privilege.

When asked how she tackles power and privilege, Christine specifically asked me to clarify what I meant. Once clarified, she related it to the APTN show First Contact.

Christine: I think the only time it came up was when we watched First Contact. And they had their preconceived notions of First Nations. They were rude and had all these judgements based on whatever they thought. I think it was good for my students to see that, and it provided a platform for speaking, and opportunity to say I've seen that. It gave us an opportunity to talk about that issue that is in society for sure".

Christine had a teachable moment to talk about issues of power and privilege when it came up in a documentary. It wasn't clear that Christine understood power and privilege well, and it was not something she was actively working with as a concept with her students.

James has a master's degree in critical environmental education through the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan. He is well versed in anti-racism and anti-oppressive education. He discussed power and privilege a few times throughout the interview. When learning about the treaties he became aware of his own personal power.

James: Y'know working within a system that created the most power for White, Middle-class heterosexual males, and I'm trying to teach about how we need to disrupt that system.

James explained how he tries to use his position of power as a platform to help others learn about Treaty Education so that they can see the systems of power that benefit White settlers.

When completing a master's degree, Gabe studied critical race theory. He uses this backdrop to help his students understand and become critical of power structures. He was able to give some specific examples of how he uses binaries and the work of Howard Zinn and the Theatre of the Oppressed with his high school aged students.

Morgan uses the book *Red Wolf* by Jennifer Dance to tackle issues of power and privilege. She believes that stories have the biggest impact on her students. She added that you can tackle issues of power and privilege in a variety of ways from Treaty Education to women's rights. For her, the goal is trying to help students learn about "the different experiences of people around the world" (Morgan). She also added that middle years teachers have the ability to tackle inequality through the resources section in curriculum.

Emma said she does not cover issues of power and privilege with her grade three students because of their age:

Emma: White privilege, I remember teaching in grades 6 and 7. That's tough, it's a really big concept. I don't think I even get it. But I remember teaching about colonialism, and they got it and knew it was a bad thing. I could see they felt passionate about it. But the White privilege? I dunno that they could connect to it, but maybe they could connect with being treated unfairly because they're

teenagers, the old going shopping and somebody is following them. But for White privilege, I don't know.

It was difficult for Emma to understand the concept of White privilege and she did not think that it was a concept that her grade 3 students could understand unless she had a way to relate it to something in their own lives.

In summary, the amount that teachers covered power and privilege depended on their own understanding of power and privilege. Participants with an anti-oppressive background certainly seemed more aware of the issue and able to discuss how they tackle the issue in their own classroom.

#### **4.12 Decolonizing the Classroom**

I was not sure if teachers would understand what was meant by the phrase 'decolonize the classroom' so I added an additional question as a follow up. I asked how their classroom environment let their students know that Treaty Education was important to them. Their ideas fell into two categories: the physical environment, and the atmosphere.

Many of the teachers interviewed described posters that hung on their walls. Some had a medicine wheel. Some had a Treaty territory map on display. A few displayed sweetgrass. Angela said she displays a 13-moon calendar as well as some artifacts, sweetgrass, and sage. Christine had similar items on display including a feather, a drum, and a Métis sash. Susan said she had Indigenous dolls out for her students to play with, as well as children's books with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. As well, Susan displays many different languages on her walls and a map of Turtle Island. Gabe said that he hangs a Treaty Four map, and Emma said that her school has a Treaty Six medal on display. Several teachers said that they like to start their classes off in a circle.

Emma: I guess even just the stuff hung on the walls. Y'know, the Métis flag. Or posters with Louis Riel quotes on them.

Claire spoke about the need to get students learning on the land. She said that she takes her students outside to build sweat lodges, raise tipis, and to pick sweetgrass. She also takes them on plant walks. Gabe also has his students do a walking midterm. They travel to an unmarked

mass gravesite for children who died in a residential school. The students listen to an Elder share her story about residential schools. To contrast this experience, students walk down the street to an RCMP museum and hear the government's take on colonization. He pushes his students to criticize the way the Canadian Government is currently telling the story of nation building. To Gabe, this is one way to break out of the traditional colonial way of learning in rows, from notes on the blackboard. He attempts to get students to learn the history through story, and to be critical of the story that they've always been told.

Kelsey said that she wanted to know more about land-based education and how to take students on the land as a way to break out of traditional Eurocentric practice. She also indicated that she does not often see PD offered and when she does it is difficult to get into because not many are accepted and there is a lot of demand. A few teachers expressed interest in learning how to teach students on the land, but they were not sure how to find those resources. Not one teacher mentioned taking students to Wanuskewin in Saskatoon. One reason for this may be the financial cost of bus transportation and tours, which continues to rise. Recent austerity budgets have hit urban schools hard and teachers have to be selective for how they spend their limited classroom funds.

A few of the high school teachers mentioned that they were limited in the way they could decorate and set up their classrooms because they shared their classrooms with other teachers and had to be mindful of not always moving the desks.

The concept of relationship came up several times. Many participants spoke about how important it was to build relationship. Christine who is Indigenous spoke to this:

Christine: I think that relationships, the most important relationship, is for me to build a relationship with each and every one of my students as much as I can. But in high school, I'm the homeroom for Alt<sup>9</sup> 12, so I get them for the whole year, so that's easy with them because I know them, and I already know a lot of students because I taught them this past year. They're gonna be coming back to me, and

<sup>9</sup> Alternative (Alt) Education Curriculum is offered when students are unable to successfully meet the regular curriculum objectives even with modification. The decision to move a student to Alt education is based on various assessment including academic and cognitive functioning (A Saskatchewan School Division). The name of the school division has been withheld to allow the participant to remain anonymous.

I'm so happy about that because I was able to start building these relationships. Just knowing I talk Cree is a huge thing. I'll speak Cree, and use my accent from up north, and slang. Just the way that we talk. I just be myself, and I have teenagers too, so I know what the pop culture is.

JG: That's awesome.

Christine: I'm gonna start crying [Laughs]. I read books, and I start crying sometimes because I think about my grandparents.

JG: It's emotional work, isn't it?

Christine: I feel so bad for them.

JG: For your students?

Christine: Yeah. Because they don't have families. They don't have people that love them, so I tell my students that I love them. Not right away, because I don't want to freak them out, but at the right moment. I say that I treat you guys, and I expect things from you guys. I treat them like my own kids. Because I get up on this pedestal and start preaching to them about stuff when I'm disappointed in something someone's done. I try to set an example for the rest of the class. And they can sense it, they know. Almost like a parent to them. And people have come into my classroom and are like wow. But you can't just do that. Nobody can just do that.

JG: You have to do the relationship building first.

Christine: Yeah. And you have to truly care, and you can't teach people that. They have to honestly care about whoever. I have it. I'm feeling like there's something bigger I'm supposed to be doing, but I'll do this for now. I'm thinking all the time, I always have these big ideas, and I do huge things within the school, that's how I get to know other students. I coach and put on big projects and stuff. So, I get to learn about all the students, and build relationships, not just in my classroom.

As Christine shared her thoughts on relationship building, we can gain a sense of how complex this work is for teachers. The teacher student relationship is about reciprocity. By sharing in their world, Christine let her students know that she sees them and values them. Good relationship building is also about providing students with the opportunity to participate in projects that allow them to develop confidence and shine. Relationship building is complex. Christine also made it

clear that it is this well-developed relationship that allows her the ability to lecture her students. Her students first need to know that she cares about and loves them. Once that has been established, Christine is free to be able to correct her students' work and behavior.

When it comes to creating an atmosphere that feels safe and welcoming for Indigenous children, many teachers indicated this was a goal, but they had no real way of knowing if they were achieving their goal. When classroom discussions around White privilege become heated, I wonder how teachers are able to gain a sense of how their students are feeling. Morgan allowed her students to journal after a particularly difficult discussion on power and privilege. Here is an example of her thoughts on one of those difficult discussions with her class:

Morgan: Who has power and why? And to think critically about it, more so than in middle years. Where maybe in middle years it's the first time you're confronting them with this idea that the world isn't perfect, and the neighborhood we're in is a higher income level, a higher privilege level. And maybe it's just harder for them. They feel like the White guilt side. I think it's a hard thing for them to confront. And we did have conversations about that, when I taught it 2 years ago, that was the hardest time that I had teaching it.

Morgan had her class journal about their feelings instead of having a large class discussion.

Morgan: There were some who expressed in writing, through journaling, that they wanted to learn about it, and they were excited to learn about it, but they also felt bad about it.

These are difficult discussions for teachers to navigate. Through journaling about their feelings, we can ascertain that some of Morgan's students were not feeling safe to express their thoughts and feelings.

The participants who are trained as Following Their Voices Leaders (FTV), seemed to have a good understanding of how the atmosphere could be inclusive or exclusive. Each FTV program is set up to have a lead teacher who acts as a mentor and coach for their colleagues. They are often referred to as the FTV leader and they have received professional development to prepare them for their role. Educators involved in the program are observed by the teacher leader who observes the lesson and asks students questions and offers feedback which is intended

increase student engagement. The feedback given to teachers is then used to help create the conditions needed for good learning.

James explained the program is about giving non-judgmental feedback to teachers based on observation and speaking with students.

James: Our Following Their Voices teacher leaders come in once a month, usually. They observe your class, observe how long it takes you to answer questions. They observe where you spend time in your room, whether you're predominantly in one spot of your room. And then after they observe your lesson, they go and talk to students and see kinda, was there new learning today, did they accomplish all their tasks.

He excitedly stated that the program has "changed the way I teach!" (James). He explained that he has changed his physical environment from desks in rows to tables. Students who wanted to be unnoticed in class always sat silently at the back. Having tables allows him to use more discursive strategies.

Claire explained that Following Their Voices is about teacher practice and teachers becoming more aware of how to improve their own practice. Participants who are trained as FTV leaders observe other teachers and give non-judgmental feedback. She stated that the "focus is on Indigenous students, but really, everything they do [with the program] helps everyone." One part of decolonization is about teachers looking at their own practice and seeing where they can improve.

Both James and Claire are Following Their Voices leaders in their schools. They both shared how teachers began to look forward to the feedback they received from the team. James feels that the program is a lot of work but that it also has a lot of value.

There were a few teachers who felt that they had not considered how their classroom environment would show that Treaty Education was important and of value.

Mary: I don't know. I don't have anything in my room that shows that Treaty Education is important than... I'm not sure what you mean [laughs].

They also had not considered how to make their room especially inclusive and safe for Indigenous students. Weeks after our interview, Mary contacted me through email to thank me

for asking her this question because it had caused her to reflect on what she could do. She was excited to share her ideas with me.

To me, this seems like a good topic for teacher discussion in a professional learning community. Participants may have never considered how the physical and emotional environment in their room sends a message to their students about who belongs and who does not belong.

#### **4.13 Summary**

The teacher participants engaged in Treaty Education feel passionate about the work that they are doing. Many of these educators were involved in some form of Treaty catalyst training. In a sense, this was a catalyst for them to continue their own leaning. Time is clearly a barrier and a factor for teachers. All 11 participants felt that they do not have adequate resources or time to develop the resources that they feel they need for their students. Teaching about Indigenous Knowledge systems is still difficult work for White settler educators, and many feel they would benefit from more resources and more professional development or coaching. Overall, the participants considered the OTC Treaty Education kit was at one time a valuable tool, but that it needs some updating and further development. These teachers found it extremely helpful to have school-based administrators who are supportive and passionate about Treaty Education. Racism and White settler resistance continue to be barriers for teachers who engage in Treaty Education. Teaching students about power and privilege is difficult work for teachers when they face student resistance. According to the participants, some teachers are still not engaging in the work of examining power with their students.



## **Chapter 5 Data Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Treaty Education was developed under the progressive NDP Government of Saskatchewan and implemented under the conservative leaning Saskatchewan Party in 2008. The fact that Saskatchewan was the first province in the country to mandate treaty education is something to celebrate. The OTC and the Ministry of Education worked to develop the OTC Treaty Education kit. The creators of this kit need to be recognized and commended for the work that they have accomplished. Speaking from personal experience, when the OTC kit was placed in schools many teachers voiced a lack of awareness of Canada's history of colonization of Indigenous peoples. As such the kit was created with lots of worthwhile background information for teachers. Since this resource was created over a decade ago, teacher education programs in Saskatchewan have mandated courses in Indigenous studies for incoming students. This has resulted in many more teachers being familiar with the brutal history of colonization, including residential schools, the sixties scoop, and the Indian Act.

In 2008 the kit likely aligned well to the curriculum. However, in 2009 the government of Saskatchewan began a process of curriculum renewal. While I was not able to find any information on this process, I was able to determine that the elementary social studies curricula were created in either 2009 or 2010. When I interviewed educators, I was not surprised to hear that they felt that the OTC Treaty Education kit did not align well with curriculum as this had been my experience too. However, when looking at the timing of the release of the OTC kit and the curriculum renewal, one can assume that the OTC kit and curricular outcomes were aligned. The intent of this analysis of the OTC Treaty Education kit is to give as much constructive feedback as possible to the OTC should the kit be renewed. The OTC kit is not used nearly enough, and I want this feedback to help correct that problem.

Many positives came from the data. The teacher participants are engaged and feel passionate about Treaty Education in Saskatchewan largely because of professional development, such as Treaty catalyst training and the OTC Treaty kit training. Roughly half of the participants want to know how to teach their students about power and privilege in ways that help to create transformative change within our society. The data showed teachers want more professional development in this important aspect of Treaty Education. Educators who are involved in the

Following Their Voices (FTV) program are excited about the positive outcomes that they are seeing in their own schools. The FTV program involves ongoing professional development with peer coaching, and participants in this study who completed this program feel like they are better able to create a positive atmosphere for Indigenous students. FTV requires that teachers work to make meaningful connections with their students. Anecdotally, many participants felt that this has increased student success.

Some other positive findings were that participants felt Treaty Education is helping Indigenous students to understand they have value as human beings. Treaty Education is one way to give Indigenous students a sense of pride in themselves. As well, it was mentioned in some interviews that Treaty Education helps these students to know that they have rights. Several White settler teachers felt that Treaty Education was helping their students to understand that treaty obligations have not been fulfilled as well as to help combat racism and discrimination. The participants feel that Treaty Education is a powerful tool to help combat racism and misconception. As well, many educators want to incorporate more Indigenous Knowledge systems in their own classrooms and teacher practice. This is likely because of Treaty Education.

While there are many positives to celebrate, I believe that it is through analyzing the barriers and obstacles that we will make the most significant positive changes. I want to honor and thank the people who have worked tirelessly on Treaty Education and the OTC Treaty Education kit. It is through their work and commitment that we have a foundation to build from.

In this chapter I will first address the main research question starting with the obstacles that teachers face when covering Treaty Education in Saskatchewan. Included in this section are research participant views on the OTC Treaty resource kit with respect to student-appropriate resources and alignment to curricula. Participants' thoughts on the integration of Treaty Education into all areas of curricula and the challenges it presents will be discussed. I will briefly touch on the various supports research participants feel are in place for Treaty Education. An updated Treaty resource kit would be an enormous support for teachers, so I have included participant thoughts about an ideal Treaty resource kit. Finally, the challenges educators face when dealing with issues of White power and privilege within the contemporary multicultural classroom setting will be discussed. Due to the fact that I will address the main research question

and then each additional sub questions, at times it will be necessary to overlap with a theme mentioned in a previous section. First, I will begin with emergent themes.

### 5.1.1 Emergent Themes

Some of the themes that emerged were about the importance of Treaty Education, barriers to meeting the mandate of Treaty Education, locating resources, thoughts on the OTC kit, human supports and professional development, curriculum integration, the power of the administrator, how teachers tackle power and privilege, how teachers are decolonizing their own classrooms, and a few other sub areas. Several themes emerged from the data (see Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Emergent Themes**

<b>Importance of Treaty Education</b>	<b>OTC Treaty Resource Kit</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Decolonization</b>
to learn the true history	selected parts are in use	student friendly resources	In-school administrators	classroom environment
for Indigenous students to know their rights	desired changes to the kit	resources to help embed Indigenous knowledge systems	Racism and resistance from parents	embedding Indigenous knowledge systems in meaningful ways
to create equality		time to find, sort, and create resources	power and privilege pushback	
to end racism		White-settler resistance		

**Table 5.1 Emergent Themes**

<b>Importance of Treaty Education</b>	<b>OTC Treaty Resource Kit</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Power</b>	<b>Decolonization</b>
to understand that the treaties were not fulfilled				
to provide high quality education for Indigenous children				

For the sake of reader ease the research questions have been placed here again.

## **5.2 Research Question:**

What are supports and obstacles for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan?

### **5.2.1 Research Sub-Questions:**

- What are some of the specific ways that the OTC Treaty resource kit is being utilized by teachers engaged in Saskatchewan classrooms?
- How are Saskatchewan teachers thinking about Treaty resources that have been made available to them?
- How and where are teachers locating and creating resources on their own to fulfil the mandate of Treaty Education?
- How do teachers address White privilege when engaging with Treaty Education?

## 5.3 Obstacles

There are numerous obstacles that teachers face when engaging in Treaty Education. Workload intensification and adequate time are a major barrier that will be discussed in this section. Teachers also face challenges with the alignment of the Treaty outcomes and the Saskatchewan curriculum which may create the feeling that Treaty Education is another task being added to teachers burgeoning workloads. Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge systems is still a challenge for teachers and one that may need further addressing. Another significant barrier faced by teachers is ignorance as resistance which will be discussed in a few sections within this chapter.

### 5.3.1 Workload Intensification in an Era of Austerity

There are many obstacles for teachers who are attempting to meet the mandate of Treaty Education. Overwhelmingly, participants mentioned that they do not have enough free time to locate and create their own resources. Teacher workload intensification is on the rise in Saskatchewan, and every participant mentioned that a lack of time was a barrier. Collaboration between the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, the Government of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, resulted in a joint task force report. The report, titled *Understanding and Exploration of Teacher Time: Final Report of the Joint Committee (2015)*, stated that three factors have created workload intensification for the teachers of Saskatchewan. The report states: "Over time, increased accountability across the sector and increased demands on teacher time and greater diversity of the classroom have resulted in intensification in a teacher's workload" (p. 3)" Time is just one of the many obstacles that challenge teachers.

According to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), in June 2016 the Government of Saskatchewan launched an austerity agenda upon the education sector. The STF report, *Creating and Sustaining Change in Education (2016)* states that austerity was imposed under the guise of "administrative and governance efficiencies and improving frontline service delivery amidst continuing economic challenges" (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 2016a) . Governments around the world use this type of coded language to manipulate public perception around education funding cuts. They sell budget cuts to the public as efficiencies that are supposed to bring about better services for students. At best many governments are aiming to

manipulate public perception, at worst, they are not being truthful. Both reasons are ideologically driven, as the Saskatchewan Party opposes raising taxes or royalties.

As a result of continued austerity measures, teachers in Saskatchewan have experienced a dramatic intensification of their workload. Teacher workloads in Saskatchewan are intensifying in Saskatchewan as confirmed by the 2017 Member Survey: Professional Teaching Experiences, conducted by Praxis Analytics at the direction of the STF. The survey confirmed “only 13 percent of respondents (320 of 2,467) agree that they have sufficient time during a regular work week for lesson planning, assessment, parental contact and other necessary duties (STF, 2017). Additionally, only 13 percent of teachers feel they have ready access to additional behavioral supports (STF, 2017). On the other hand, fewer than 17 percent agreed that they have time to adapt their teaching to meet most students’ individual needs (STF, 2017). The survey creates a clear picture of the pressures that Saskatchewan teachers are facing under subsequent and ongoing austerity education budgets. Simply stated, teacher workloads have increased and will continue to increase under the current state of education funding.

I was not surprised when research participants expressed that adequate time is a barrier to Treaty Education, as this has been my experience as well. Austerity budgets have resulted in a lack of support for students, and teachers are expected to fill in the void. There are fewer Educational Assistants, fewer teacher librarians, fewer English as an Additional Language teachers, and fewer teachers providing gifted education. As a result, the diversity in the classroom must be addressed almost solely by the teacher. Time is not an infinite resource, and teachers cannot be expected to fill in the gap left by ongoing education funding reductions.

However, it is not simply a problem of teachers not having enough time— there are simply not enough adequate and appropriate resources for this work. Treaty Education was mandated over a decade ago, and surely there has been sufficient time for the creation of appropriate resources. Some research participants stated that there are not enough Treaty resources, while others voiced that the plethora of resources overwhelmed. These two concerns are not in contrast to each other, but instead they paint a similar picture: there are few readily available and appropriate resources for this work. If appropriate resources were abundant teachers would choose one and their search would be over. One thing is clear: locating and adapting content is a time-consuming task, and one that teachers feel they do not have enough time for.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action (2015) states:

We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

In Saskatchewan, the government has responded to part of this call to action— implementing Kindergarten to grade 12 curricula. Developing appropriate learning resources is the next step that must be taken if the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education is to fulfill its obligation and meet the TRC calls to action. While some resources have been created thus far, more work must be done to actualize the goal. The OTC Treaty Resource Kit is considered a primary resource, however, the reality is that teachers are not using the Treaty kit nearly enough, even though it contains an abundance of information. One of the specific objectives of the research was to determine how the kit is being utilized among teachers in Saskatchewan.

The sheer volume and size of the kit is daunting, and it takes teachers an inordinate amount of time to read and prepare lessons from the kit. Participants felt that the Treaty resource kit is a resource for teacher use only, and it contains few appropriate resources for students to use. It is also seen as hugely time consuming to go through. The Treaty resource kit is over a decade old and participants felt it is due for an update. It was also felt that the kit does not align well with

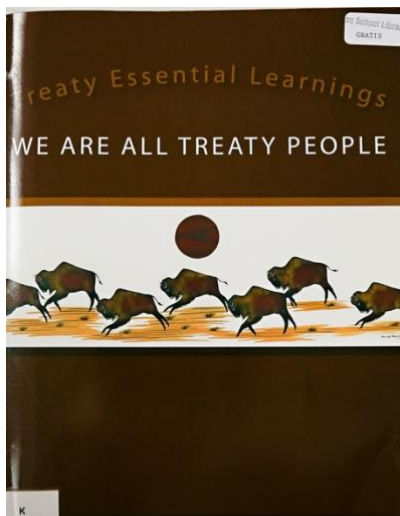


Figure 5-1 Treaty Essential Learnings

curriculum. Many research participants stated that the kit was useful to them when they first began the work of Treaty Education—it helped them to learn the colonial history that they had been blind to. However, they no longer use the kit and are finding resources elsewhere. The OTC website was considered to be a good source for videos, but some suggested that the videos are also outdated. A few participants use just small portions of the kit—including maps and the “brown book” *Treaty Essential Learnings: We Are All Treaty People* (see Figure 5.1). I have specifically referred to this book as the “brown book” because this is how several participants referred to this particular part of the kit. They were unsure of the name but knew the color. This book is not specific to one grade. As well, most participants were not aware of and were not using the supplemental material that the OTC released in 2019. Aligning these resources into one location may eliminate the problem of teachers being unaware of specific resources.

For triangulation purposes, I analyzed and photographed the content of the kit from my own school. My goal was to determine the accuracy of the data collected from participants of this research. This specific Treaty resource kit may contain a few additional supplemental items, and a few pieces of original content may be missing as the kit is over a decade old. This kit is likely fairly representative of most kits housed in Saskatchewan public school libraries. There are 18



Figure 5-2 Contents of the OTC Treaty Education Kit

individual items in the kit, including a four-inch elementary binder, and a three-inch middle



years/high school binder. Locating content for a specific grade is straightforward as booklets and content dividers are clearly marked and well organized. The problem, however, is that what is supposedly to be used for a certain grade is too advanced for those students. There are literally thousands of pages of content in this resource kit, with very little that can be taken and directly used with students. One research participant was able to create her own content from the Treaty kit when she had an intern working in her room. This illustrates the time commitment needed to make the kit into an appropriate resource for students.

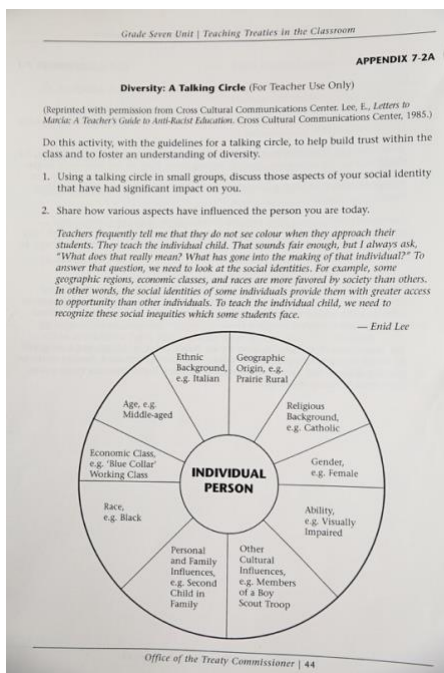


Figure 5-3 Activity from the grade 7 OTC Treaty kit resource

I analyzed several lessons in the kit. One of the grade 7 lessons required that I had to flip to several unidentified sections of the binder to find different appendix items. At first glance the lesson looks well planned, organized, and easy to execute. However, for this lesson the content was not explained well, and it was difficult to determine the actual purpose of the talking circle discussion activity (see Figure 5.2). There were no examples of teacher questions or possible student answers. Educators facilitate discussions and activities with purpose and use questions to guide student thinking. A streamlined Teacher's Guide would likely improve this situation. Simply stating the intended goal of the talking circle would clarify for educators the purpose of

the activity. For this activity, one stated goal could have been: Use a talking circle to discuss the concept of privilege and social identity. It could have also given an example of how to broach this subject with students. The quote under the activity (see Figure 5.3) asks teachers to consider how skin color impacts access to opportunities. Stating the intended purpose of this activity would aid teachers in reaching the intended goal. For this specific lesson it was time consuming to find all of the materials, and to understand the purpose.

One grade 2 lesson included nine short activities, each activity had one or two required internet links, only two out of 14 links still work (see Figure 5.4). The lesson was unusable. Elementary teachers are generalists who must prepare lessons for six or more areas of content. Efficient use of time is paramount to lesson planning, assessment, and evaluation.

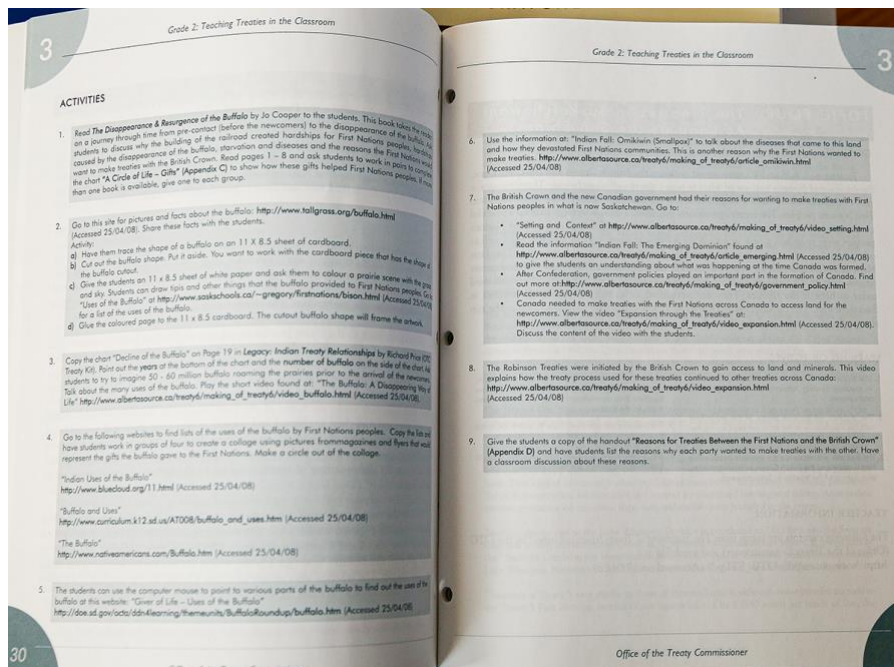


Figure 5-4 Grade 2 OTC Treaty kit activity

The educators who will actually take the time to do this onerous work will be teachers who are already invested in Treaty Education. Unfortunately, even highly invested teachers feel that they do not have adequate time to go through the kit to draft notes and craft lessons for their students. This leads them to look elsewhere for appropriate resources.

Unfortunately, the current structure of the OTC kit enables ignorance to become a form of resistance to actually engage in Treaty Education. Garrett and Segall (2013) contend that

ignorance by way of not knowing is one type of resistance, and they cite Louge who said, “Ignorance is not passive, empty, or innocent. It is, instead, a defense against knowing” (p. 297). The structure of the kit is onerous for invested teachers to use because it requires a large time commitment to read information and create student materials. Educators who are not yet teaching Treaty Education can simply use the current state of the OTC kit as an excuse for not doing this work.

The main resource for Treaty Education needs to meet the needs of teachers or the mandate of Treaty Education will not be. White innocence and colonial blindness can be maintained when the Treaty Education resources are onerous, confusing, and outdated. Rather than teachers doing the difficult work of unpacking their settler backpacks, teachers can maintain that time is their barrier.

Many Canadians, including educators from Saskatchewan, are colonial blind. They refuse knowing about the colonial history of Canada as a form of resistance. According to Schick (2012), “The refusal to know is accomplished through various discourses including the notion of meritocracy and just rewards” (p. 10). An additional strategy of resistance for teachers could be that there is not enough time to find the resources needed to meet the mandate of curriculum. They further entrench themselves in ignorance as resistance by claiming to not have enough time to go through the Treaty Education kit to inform themselves. However, the current reality for teachers in Saskatchewan is that workloads are intensifying, and teachers do not have adequate time to create appropriate student resources for every lesson they must deliver. Teachers need appropriate resources to use with their students. As a result of continued austerity budgets in Saskatchewan there is now a lack of specialists and educational assistants supporting teachers and students. Now more than ever, teachers have to cope with teaching students with various learning disabilities, mental health issues, and additional challenges. Class size and increasing complexity of the classroom continues to intensify the demands on teacher time. The teacher participants would certainly welcome ready-to-use and student appropriate Treaty resources.

As mentioned above, another frustration expressed by research participants is a lack of resources appropriate for student use. In my work to triangulate the data, I analyzed the grade 4 Saskatchewan Social Studies curriculum to determine the accuracy of participant perspectives. Many of the curricular outcomes use verbs like analyze, create, explain, illustrate, and

investigate. These verbs direct teachers in their lesson planning and material preparation to provide resources for students to work with. One of the struggles research participants experience, is locating content that students can read and comprehend.

Through analysis of the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum the problem is clear. The first outcome, Interactions and Interdependence (IN 4.1) states: “Analyze how First Nations and Métis people have shaped and continue to shape Saskatchewan” (Ministry of Education, 2010). The indicators for this outcome suggest the creation of “biographic profiles of a selection of First Nations and Metis leaders in the time period prior to Saskatchewan joining Confederation” (Ministry of Education, 2010). The examples given are Poundmaker, Big Bear, Louis Riel, Gabriele Dumont, and Almighty Voice. The curriculum lists suggested resources, but not one is appropriate for this particular outcome. Educators are left with no choice but to search for this information elsewhere. There are websites and online encyclopedias that provide information, but they are beyond a grade 4 independent and instructional reading level.

According to Orlowski (2011), too often racism is personalized, and society fails to see or comprehend systemic and institutional forms of racism. The failure to recognize institutional and systemic racism allows it to go unchallenged and unchanged while White hegemony is maintained. Aveling (2007) states:

racism is a complex interplay of individual attitudes, social values, and institutional practices. It is expressed in the actions of individuals and institutions and is promoted in the ideology of popular culture. It changes form in response to social change. (p. 70)

Aveling maintains that it is important to understand the various forms of racism so that racism can be countered in its various guises.

There are other problems with some of the content of the Treaty kit as well. Schick (2013) states:

As important as the [Treaty] Kit may be, it can be delivered in a way that completely ignores the effects of colonization and White privilege and the more challenging discussions about power relations and racism that have produced such unequal outcomes in Canadian society and especially on the prairies. (p. 3)

While examining the Treaty resource kit, I noticed that some of the language was potentially problematic. Here is one example from the grade 2 teacher background information:

The First Nations had differing reasons for wanting a Treaty relationship with the British Crown. During the 1870s, the First Nations were going through a period of transition. New diseases such as smallpox were wiping out large numbers of First Nations peoples. The decline of the buffalo, the Plains First Nations' main source of food, had created starvation conditions in their communities. Food and economic sources were dwindling. By the mid-1800s, the fur trade had begun to decline because of over-trapping and a drop-in demand for furs. The decline of the fur trade affected the livelihood of the First Nations in northern areas. With their traditional way of life slowly disappearing, their livelihood was threatened, and the First Nations wanted new ways of making a living. They saw treaties as a bridge to the future and a way to provide for their future generations. (Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2008a, pp. 1–3)

This background information locates the need for treaties with the First Nations people who supposedly needed the “benevolence” of the British Crown. Nowhere in this background information does it suggest that White settlers had anything to do with passing smallpox through blankets, or the purposeful starvation techniques, including the eradication of the bison, which were strategies used by the government to force Indigenous peoples into signing Treaty. Perhaps this is a reflection of political expediency that could have been necessary at the time the kit was created. This is background information for grade 2, and at seven and eight years of age children likely do not need all of the tragic details of colonization. However, Schick is correct in her

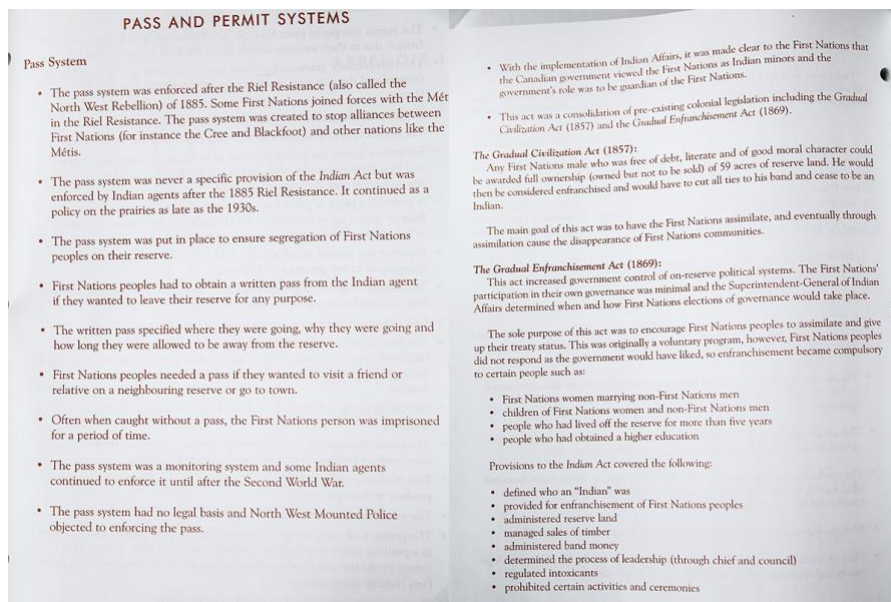


Figure 5-5 The grade 4 teacher guide from the OTC Treaty resource kit

contention—the language of this Treaty resource does not challenge teachers to develop a larger consideration of ongoing colonization.

Research participants also felt that the language used in the Treaty resource kit is not appropriate for student use. Christine, an Indigenous teacher, and Claire, a White-settler teacher, who both teach in high school, explained that they use the primary school sections of the Treaty resource kit with their students. Potential scope and sequence problems aside, teachers struggle to find Treaty resources that their students can read and comprehend. Claire, a White-settler high school teacher, mentioned the grade 2 and 4 books from the Treaty resource kit that she uses for Native Studies 10, 20, and 30, including the information provided on the Pass System (see Figure 5.5).

Contained on the two pages illustrated in Figure 5.5, from the grade 4 resource, are many words that could be problematic for grade 4 students (see Table 5.1). I agree with Claire and Christine that the language is problematic for students. There are words in Table 5.1 that would need to be decoded and discussed with my grades 8 English Language Arts students.

**Table 5.1: Vocabulary from grade 4 Treaty Resource Kit on The Pass System**

implementation	minors	guardian	consolidation
pre-existing	colonial	legislation	enfranchisement
literate	moral	enfranchised	cease
assimilate	assimilation	governance	compulsory
provisions	administered	timber	intoxicants
prohibited	enforced	alliances	segregation

**Table 5.1: Vocabulary from grade 4 Treaty Resource Kit on The Pass System**

obtain

imprisoned

It is my contention that a lack of adequate and proper resources to meet the mandate of Treaty Education is a form of systemic racism, or racist attitudes in society, that must be acknowledged and corrected. The system itself has given rise to this form of racism by placing a low level of importance on the creation and provision of proper resources. According to Yamato, as cited in Aveling (2007), “racism is pervasive to the point that we take many of its manifestations for granted, believing ‘that’s life’” (p. 71). In Saskatchewan, if educators view a lack of appropriate resources as the way things are done, they likely do not question the hegemony through the under resourcing of Treaty Education. The proper resourcing of education is the responsibility of the government and the Ministry of Education. Creating resources takes a considerable amount of money, and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education should be providing adequate funds to create appropriate and up to date resources.

### **5.3.2 Treaty Outcomes and Curriculum Alignment**

The alignment between the curriculum and the Treaty essential learnings was also a perceived barrier to Treaty Education. Research participants stated that the Treaty essential learnings were not well aligned to curriculum. Any content or topic that does not align with curriculum could be viewed by teachers as an add-on, and as a result could be easily dismissed or ignored.

In order to triangulate the data, I examined the curriculum, the Treaty themes and topics set out in the Treaty resource kit, and the Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators set out by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education in 2013<sup>10</sup>. These documents set out the content teachers

<sup>10</sup> The Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators Ministry of Saskatchewan 2013 will be referred to as the 2013 Treaty Outcomes



must cover. All three of these documents were located in different places and were not housed together.

The Treaty resource kit outlines themes and topics in a table at the beginning of

**Kindergarten to Grade 6**  
**TEACHING TREATIES IN THE CLASSROOM: THEMES & TOPICS**

Themes	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
<b>Major Theme</b>	Since Time Immemorial	The Lifestyles of First Nations Peoples Before and After the Arrival of the Newcomers	The Numbered Treaties in Saskatchewan	The First Nations and the Newcomers Settle in What Is Now Known as Saskatchewan	The Indian Act of 1876 Was Not Part of Treaty	The First Nations Struggle To Be Recognized	Revival of the Treaty Relationship: Living in Harmony
<b>Relationships</b>	The Diversity of First Nations Peoples	First Contact Between First Nations Peoples and the Newcomers	The First Nations and the British Crown Make Treaties	First Nations Reserves and the Settlement of the Newcomers on the Land	The Indian Act of 1876	First Nations Peoples and Non-First Nations Society	First Nations, Federal and Provincial Governments Work Together
<b>Traditional Teachings</b>	The Circle of Life and the Sacred Number 4	Mother Earth	The Meaning of the Pipe in Treaty-making	The First Nations Agree to Share the Land	The First Nations' Traditional Teachings and Languages Are Suppressed	The First Nations Return to Their Languages and Cultural Teachings	The Restoration of First Nations Languages and Cultures
<b>History</b>	The First Nations Lived Here First: Pre-Contact Lifestyles	First Nations Peoples and the Buffalo	Reasons for Treaty	First Nations and Non-First Nations Peoples Benefit from Treaties	The First Nations' Traditional Lifestyles Change	The First Nations Struggle for Recognition as Nations	First Nations Peoples and Communities Work Toward Self-Sufficiency
<b>Treaties</b>	A Treaty is More Than a Promise	We Are All Treaty People	The Treaties in Saskatchewan: As Long as the Sun Shines	The Spirit and Intent of Treaties	Unfulfilled Treaty Promises	The Rebirth of Treaties in Saskatchewan	Treaties in Saskatchewan Are Recognized and Affirmed, and Must Be Honoured and Implemented

Figure 5-6 Themes from the grade 6 OTC Treaty resource kit

the book or section for each level. The table provides an overview for a specific range. A photo from the table in the grade 4 book is shown. The themes are highlighted in orange (see Figure 5.6).

The 2013 Treaty Outcomes also includes a table for each with key learnings (see Figure 5.7). The Treaty outcomes and indicators are set up by four broad areas of learning:



Treaty Relationships, Spirit and Intent of Treaties, Historical Context, and Treaty Promises and Provisions. The outcome is located at the top and indicators are in bullet points below.

Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators			
Grade Four: Understanding How Treaty Promises Have Not Been Kept			
<b>TR4<sup>1</sup>:</b> Analyze how relationships are affected when treaty promises are kept or broken. <b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Represent examples of promises experienced in their families, classrooms and communities.</li> <li>➤ Discuss the impact on relationships when promises are kept or broken.</li> <li>➤ Identify treaty promises from the local treaty territory and the extent to which those treaty promises have been fulfilled</li> <li>➤ Discuss the effect of unfulfilled treaty promises on relationships.</li> </ul>	<b>SI4<sup>2</sup>:</b> Examine the intent of treaty in relation to education. <b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss why First Nations signatories believed there was a benefit to both European education and traditional ways of learning.</li> <li>➤ Research the forms of education that First Nations people have experienced since the treaties were signed.</li> <li>➤ Discuss why some First Nations peoples refer to "education is our new buffalo" (i.e., the means to survive in the new world with the newcomers).</li> </ul>	<b>HC4<sup>3</sup>:</b> Explore the historical reasons why people entered into treaty. <b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine how the disappearance of the buffalo and the loss of traditional hunting and trapping territories created a need for First Nations to enter into treaties.</li> <li>➤ Explore how people used the land before the community students are living in was formed.</li> <li>➤ Recognize that treaties provided opportunity for newcomers to live on and share the land of what is now Saskatchewan.</li> </ul>	<b>TPP4<sup>4</sup>:</b> Examine the objectives of the First Nations and British Crown's representatives in negotiating treaty. <b>Indicators:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine the benefits each signatory hoped to achieve.</li> <li>➤ Analyze the challenges and opportunities associated with negotiating treaties (e.g., communication among groups, transportation, participation, preservation of language and cultural practices).</li> <li>➤ Identify how each of the signatories to treaty recorded the events.</li> </ul>

<b>KEY</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>
<b>TR</b>	<b>Treaty Relationships</b> – By the end of grade 12, students will understand that Treaty relationships are based on a deep understanding of peoples' identity which encompasses: languages, ceremonies, worldviews, and relationship to place and the land.
<b>SI</b>	<b>Spirit and Intent of Treaties</b> - By the end of grade 12, students will recognize that there is interconnectedness between thoughts and actions which is based on the implied and explicit intention of those actions. The spirit and intent of Treaties serve as guiding principles for all that we do, say, think, and feel.

Figure 5-7 The grade 4 Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators from the Ministry of Education 2013

The Saskatchewan curriculum is available online and each outcome can be opened to reveal half a dozen or more indicators for each outcome. I chose to examine the grade 4 Social Studies curriculum because it is the curricular area that most explicitly deals with the history of Canada and Treaty Education. When looking at the outcomes and indicators there are 10 out of 13 outcomes in the grade 4 Social Studies program that deal with Treaty content (see Figure 5.8).

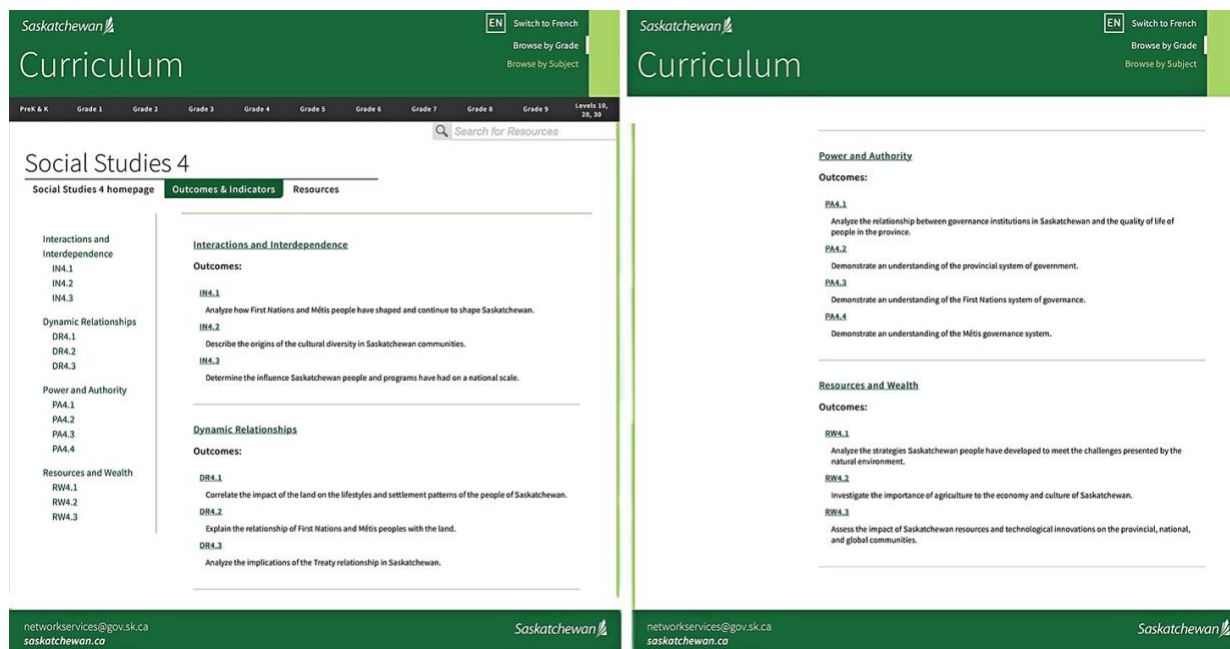


Figure 5-8 Grade 4 provincial social studies curricular outcomes

It would be beyond the scope of this study to analyze the Social Studies curriculum for all grades. The point I am making can be shown by analyzing one grade. Using grade 4 as an example, we can see that the OTC Treaty resource kit and the curriculum do not align. The Treaty kit themes include the Indian Act, however this would more closely align with the grades 7 and 8 social studies curricula. Analyzing this content will provide a good example of why research participants feel that the Treaty outcomes do not always align with curriculum. This misalignment is likely a result of curriculum renewal. However, it is the responsibility of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education to provide adequate resourcing after curriculum renewal.

The Treaty resource kit directs teachers of grade 4 students to focus on the Indian Act, First Nations languages and suppression of those languages, and unfulfilled Treaty promises. The 2013 Treaty Outcomes direct teachers to focus on relationships and kept and broken Treaty promises, intent of Treaty, the historical reasons people entered into Treaty, and the objectives of the First Nations and British Crown's representatives when negotiating Treaty. The grade 4 Saskatchewan curriculum, however, directs teachers to analyze how First Nations and Métis People have shaped and continue to shape Saskatchewan, describe the origins of cultural diversity, correlate the impact of land on the lifestyles and settlement patterns of the people of Saskatchewan, explain the relationships of First Nations and Métis people with the land, and

analyze the implications of Treaty relationship in Saskatchewan (see Table 5.1). In other words, the political content of the 2013 Treaty Outcomes has been removed.

**Table 5.1 Grade 4 Treaty Education Themes from Three Sources**

OTC Treaty Resource Kit	Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2013	Saskatchewan Curriculum
The Indian Act of 1876 was not part of Treaty	TR4 <sub>1</sub> Analyze how relationships are affected when Treaty promises are kept or broken	IN 4.1 Analyze how First Nations people and Métis people have shaped and continue to shape Saskatchewan
The Indian Act 1876	SI4 <sub>2</sub> Examine the intent of Treaty in relations to education	IN4.2 Describe the origins of the cultural diversity in Saskatchewan communities
The First Nations' traditional teachings and languages are suppressed	HC4 <sub>3</sub> Explore the historical reasons why people entered into Treaty	DR4.1 Correlate the impact of the land on the lifestyles and settlement patterns of the people of Saskatchewan
The First Nations traditional lifestyle change	TPP4 <sub>4</sub> Examine the objectives the First Nations and British Crown's representatives in negotiating Treaty	DR4.2 Explain the relationship of First Nations and Métis people with the land
Unfulfilled Treaty promises		DR4.3 Analyze the implications of the Treaty relationship in Saskatchewan

OTC Treaty Resource Kit	Treaty Education Outcomes and Indicators Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2013	Saskatchewan Curriculum
		PA4.3 and PA4.4 Demonstrate an understanding of First Nations and Métis systems of governance

Through this example it is apparent that the OTC Treaty resource kit does not align with curriculum. In fact, the Indian Act is part of the grade Seven 2013 Treaty Outcomes but is not specifically mentioned in the Saskatchewan Curriculum. From Table 3 it could be suggested that the 2013 Treaty Outcomes are actually indicators from the grade Four curriculum outcome DR4.3— analyze the implications of the Treaty relationship in Saskatchewan. I have compared the 2013 Treaty Outcomes with the indicators from outcome DR4.3 (see Table 5.2). However, it is important to note that there are also 13 more indicators to go along with 2013 Treaty Outcomes that are not included in this table. The 2013 Treaty Outcomes and Indicators are numerous, and they are in addition to the Social Studies Curriculum.

**Table 5.2 Saskatchewan Treaty Education Themes**

Grade 4 Treaty Education Outcomes Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2013	Saskatchewan Curriculum Grade 4 Social Studies Indicators for
TR41 Analyze how relationships are affected when Treaty promises are kept or broken	a.) Locate Treaty areas within Saskatchewan and locate reserves within the Treaty area of the school.
SI42 Examine the intent of Treaty in relation to education	b.) Investigate conditions which precipitated Treaty negotiations in Saskatchewan

Grade 4 Treaty Education Outcomes Saskatchewan Ministry of Education 2013	Saskatchewan Curriculum Grade 4 Social Studies Indicators for
HC43 Explore the historical reasons why people entered into Treaty	c.) Research Treaty provisions, including the spirit and intent of Treaties as well as material considerations
TPP44 Examine the objectives of the First Nations and British Crown's representatives in negotiating Treaty	d.) Assess the benefits of treaties to all Saskatchewan people

indicators. Teachers are not expected to address every indicator in the curriculum. However, the number of outcomes and indicators provides evidence of the workload intensification experience. In addition, the OTC Treaty resource kit adds an additional four themes that are not related to curriculum. As well the 2013 Treaty Outcomes document adds an additional 13 indicators. Keep in mind that teachers must reference three different documents housed in three different places to find these themes, outcomes, and indicators. It is overwhelming and time consuming to ascertain what needs to be taught. It is likely that many teachers will focus on what the curriculum directs them to do and ignore that rest.

Needham and Cottrell (2016) conducted a research project with Saskatchewan Treaty catalyst teachers and found perceived alignment problems between the Treaty outcomes and curricular outcomes. They state: “with respect to curricular alignment, participants stressed the need for the creation of specific outcomes in contrast to the separate Treaty kit curriculum, as is currently the case” (p. 14). It was stated that participants noted their colleagues viewed the Treaty outcomes and curriculum outcomes as separate, when they should be linked together. Participants stated that the Treaty outcomes do not mesh well with the renewed curriculum (Needham & Cottrell, 2016). The Treaty outcomes and curricular outcomes do not align, and this is why teachers continue to perceive Treaty Education as an add-on. It is interesting to note that in 2016, Treaty catalyst teachers were calling for a separate document that stated the Treaty outcomes by grade. That document exists and was created in 2013. This could point to a problem of teacher

workload intensification— more outcomes were added without the removal of others. The appropriate space within the curriculum must be made for Treaty Education. When Treaty Education is seen to be an add-on, it is too easily dismissed and ignored. It is also possible that these educators simply did not know that these outcomes existed. As workloads intensify, educators are asked to focus on a broad range of new initiatives. To me, this also raises questions about how this document and the OTC supplemental resources document were shared in schools. Teachers who are struggling under intense workloads may not be aware of updated documents or resources to support Treaty Education.

Treaty Education appears to be important to Saskatchewan teachers. According to the 2017 Member Survey: Professional Teaching Experiences, conducted by Praxis Analytics at the direction of the STF, 62% of respondents agreed with the statement: “First Nations and Métis ways of knowing and being inform my teaching” (STF, 2017). There were 1,895 out of 13, 000 educators who responded to this survey, which makes it clear that the majority of teachers in Saskatchewan view Treaty Education as important.

However, the current state of the Treaty outcomes offers educators another reason to practice ignorance as resistance. The Treaty outcomes do not appear to align with curriculum, and they may be viewed as additional expectations on already overworked teachers. As stated earlier, Garrett and Segall (2013) state that ignorance is not only a way of not knowing but also a strategy of resistance. They contend that to ignore is to actually acknowledge and make a choice. In the case of Treaty Education, teachers may say they do not know which outcomes to follow and ignore them altogether. Given that the Treaty outcomes do not always align with curriculum, teachers can “deploy resistance” (Garrett & Segall, 2013, p. 297) by avoiding the difficult work that Treaty outcomes ask them to do, and instead prioritize other topics in the curriculum.

It could be easy to individualize this problem to specific teachers who are racist or lazy. However, that would be to ignore the forms of systemic racism that allowed Treaty Education to be seen as an add-on to curriculum. According to Orlowski (2011):

In order for such a [critical left] Social Studies curriculum to be accepted and implemented, however, larger segments of society must recognize the legitimacy of the numerous social struggles. Yet, conservative and right-liberal elements do not support the idea of schools teaching about these struggles. (p.65)

We would be remiss to ignore that the current mandated Treaty curriculum was created under the former left-leaning Saskatchewan NDP government, and rolled out under the current right-leaning Saskatchewan Party. The under resourcing, lack of alignment, and the lack of space created for Treaty Education is a form of systemic racism brought about by a society that does not support a critical left curriculum. Mandating Treaty Education without the proper supports and alignment allows society to feel good in their White innocence and benevolence towards Indigenous peoples while colonization continues on unchecked. In a perverse way Saskatchewan can take pride in knowing they were the first to mandate Treaty Education, while not creating the proper resources or time for teachers to do this work.

According to Schick (2013), the challenge to disrupt the discourses of the dominant culture and national resentment is more profound than just persuading White teachers to do good teaching. The lack of uptake of Treaty Education by Saskatchewan teachers is not merely simple resistance on the part of teachers. Schick (2013) states: “It is more deep-seated in the production of the nation and the contested identifications of who may write the national narrative” (p. 14). Treaty Education has the power to disrupt our national identity, and Canadians are highly invested in seeing themselves as benevolent and tolerant of multiculturalism. To embrace Treaty Education is to shatter our Canadian image of ourselves as people who are tolerant, benevolent, and accepting of diversity. Canada has a history founded on cultural genocide, and systemic racism continues to colonize and oppress. Policies aimed at assimilation have failed and instead brought about staggering rates of poverty and incarceration. The reality of this history is at odds with our national identity. It is for this reason that the TRC calls on federal and provincial governments to develop age appropriate curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and the history of Aboriginal people.

Space must be created for Treaty Education within the mainstream educational system. If the space is not created, Treaty Education is viewed as an add-on, and something that teachers may not make the time for. According to Barnhardt (2008) “parallel initiatives aimed at loosening the structure or Western knowledge” (p. 7) have to be implemented when creating a space for Indigenous knowledge in education. I believe that this can be extended to curriculum. When mandating Treaty Education, curriculum needs to be adjusted and pared down to make space. With the continued intensification of teacher workloads, teachers are tasked with focusing their

attention on numerous different areas of importance. When teachers are expected to make everything a priority, the likely outcome is that nothing ends up being a priority.

### **5.3.3 Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge Across Curricula**

The TRC calls on federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work in collaboration and consultation with Survivors, Indigenous peoples, and educators to find the best ways to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom. For this reason, it is important to understand how teachers are feeling about the integration of Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in their own practice. The challenges that committed Treaty educators face can give us important information on where more work still needs to be done.

Several research participants stated that infusing Treaty Education into all areas of the curriculum is a difficult task. Some, like Claire, who is a White-settler high school teacher, said that she wanted someone to show her how. Others, like Gabe, also a White-settler high school teacher, stated that it takes a lot of imagination to Indigenize all areas of curricula. According to Howard, cited in Yu (2012), White teachers must be racially educated if they are to be effective critical multicultural<sup>11</sup> teachers. Teachers must understand the larger racial histories, struggles, and injustices, and the role of White power, privilege, and racism that underlie and entrench the value systems and conceptual framework of the education system (Yu, 2012). The infusion of Treaty content into curriculum is not merely about surface culture, but about elevating the status of Indigenous knowledge systems while at the same time dismantling White power, privilege and essentialist notions of White superiority.

According to Tupper and Cappello (2008), “In Saskatchewan, the officially mandated curriculum does little to encourage students to take account for their own privilege or lack thereof” (p. 576). Treaty Education, taught merely as in the past, does little to help students understand the significance of the Treaty relationship. Teaching treaties should be about deconstructing the dominant narrative instead of simply offering an additional perspective (Tupper & Cappello, 2008). Including Indigenous knowledge systems should also be viewed as a way of challenging hegemonic views of Western knowledge. Perhaps the question of how to

<sup>11</sup> Anti-racist education is referred to critical multicultural education in the US.



embed Treaty content into all areas of curricula is not as important as the why. Both teachers and students need to understand why Indigenous knowledge systems are important. It is not about adding another worldview, it is about challenging essentialism and hegemony.

Without a concrete understanding of why Indigenous knowledge systems should be taught, White teachers may inadvertently “perform white racial knowledge in a way that manages to hold up a favorable image of whites to themselves while simultaneously reinforcing universal white privilege as a naturalized entitlement” (Schick, 2013, p. 13). Without a specific purpose to disrupt White hegemony, infusing Indigenous knowledge systems could be seen as “pausing to have a cheesy First Nations moment,” which was a concern raised by Morgan, a White-settler middle years teacher. The risk of taking a purely pluralist or liberal multicultural<sup>12</sup> approach to the integration of Indigenous knowledge is that it does little to disrupt dominant narratives of White hegemony. Without a proper understanding of why Indigenous knowledge should be included in curricula and how to disrupt the dominant narrative, teachers may be relegating Indigenous knowledge systems as inferior.

According to St. Denis (2007) an anti-racist approach to education “offers a way to explore how practices of racialization have positioned Indigenous peoples differently and sometimes against each other at the expense of a common goal of challenging [the] marginalization” (p. 1081) faced by Indigenous peoples. Further, St. Denis contends that

<sup>12</sup> According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) there are four approaches to multicultural education. Liberal and pluralistic forms of multicultural education are both power-blind as there is no examination of systems of power that marginalize and oppress. The four approaches to multicultural education are:

- 1.) monoculturalism conservative ideology that promotes a return to the mythic period of one common culture.
- 2.) liberal multiculturalism focuses on surface culture like music and art.
- 3.) pluralistic multiculturalism uses singular gains made by few marginalized people as evidence that racism is over. An example of this would be US President Obama.
- 4.) critical multiculturalism focuses on the hidden forms of power that marginalize and oppress (cited in Orłowski, 2011).

incorporating cultural traditions and developing culturally relevant curriculum content for all subject areas has had positive impacts, but it does not go far enough. The integration of Indigenous knowledge does little to address the ongoing racism faced by Indigenous youth on a daily basis.

The intended goal of incorporating Indigenous content into all curricular areas should be to give students a deep and meaningful understanding that Indigenous knowledge systems are valuable and equal to Eurocentric Western knowledge. If done well, educators can offer a counter narrative to essentialist ideas that Western knowledge systems are superior to Indigenous knowledge systems. However, this remains a challenging task for White-settler teachers in Saskatchewan.

One of the challenges is that approximately 90 percent of Saskatchewan teachers are from a White-settler background (Carr-Stewart & Dray, 2010). For White-settler teachers, incorporating Indigenous content and ways of knowing into the curriculum will not be simple, and this would also be true for Indigenous teachers who have been colonized and had their cultures stolen from them. Some of the research participants acknowledged that incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems was difficult. Samantha, an Indigenous First Nations in a band school, pointed out that there are very few resources that set this out well for teachers. She explained that if she had to teach about Black culture, she would not know where to start. Black skin should not be equated with culture any more than White skin should be. The point is, however, that it is difficult for teachers to teach something they do not know or understand. For many White-settler teachers, developing a deep understanding of Indigenous culture will require good resources and adequate time for professional development and learning.

However, this work would help Saskatchewan meet one of the TRC's (2015) calls to action—for government to provide the funding to “educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom”. While the TRC specifically addresses this call to universities, school divisions could also offer this professional development, especially if the funding was provided. School divisions could certainly help meet this call to action by placing a focus on professional development for teachers already trained as Treaty catalyst supports.

Incorporating Indigenous worldview into curriculum is difficult for teachers to imagine. White-settler teachers are entrenched in a Eurocentric worldview and imagining another worldview and how to share it with students is a challenge. Gabe, a White-settler high school teacher and drama major, gave an example of the new high school drama curriculum which asks students to adopt the perspectives of others. This specific curriculum outcome was intended to be the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit outcome. Gabe stated that there was a lot of resistance to this outcome from the teachers who piloted the drama curriculum. As Gebhard (2017) states “ubiquitous narratives of downtrodden Indigenous families make exploring alternative” (p. 17) perspectives a risk if a broad understanding of colonial history is missing. Without the proper understanding of the colonial history of Indigenous peoples, students may end up re-enacting stereotypes that position Indigenous peoples as responsible for their own marginalization and oppression, and White settlers as their saviors.

According to Barnhardt (2007), Indigenous peoples throughout the world have sustained their unique worldview and knowledge systems for millennia, even while undergoing major social upheavals as a result of colonization. “Many of the core values, beliefs, and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are beginning to be recognized as being just as valid for today’s generations as they were for generations past” (Barnhardt, 2007, p. 6). Many of the knowledge systems of a particular place offer lessons that can benefit everyone and offer a sustainable way to live on this planet (Barnhardt, 2007). Incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems in meaningful ways would meet one of the TRC’s calls to action: “Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and respect” (2015). Developing an understanding of Indigenous knowledge would be a concrete way to

build respect and intercultural understanding. Educators can help their students learn that Indigenous knowledge systems are complex and provide meaningful ways to live sustainably.

When participants were asked to share how they were incorporating Treaty Education into

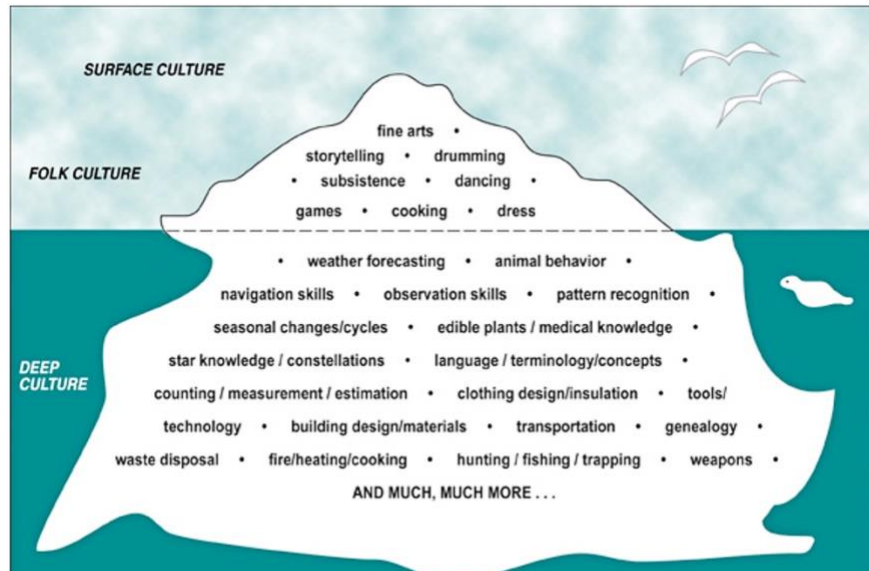


Figure 5-9 Taken from Barnhardt (2007).

all areas of the curriculum, many of their examples fell into surface culture— storytelling, drumming, dance, and fine arts. Participants expressed that they wanted to know how to incorporate deep culture, but that they lacked the knowledge. Mary, a veteran White-settler teacher, said that she would like to teach her students about plants from a traditional perspective, but that she lacked the knowledge. Claire wanted someone to show her how to do this work well.

According to Barnhardt (2007), a variety of initiatives had to be implemented in Alaska to document Indigenous knowledge to make it accessible within the school system. As well, parallel initiatives were needed to loosen the structure of the Western knowledge stream to make space for local contributions. He maintains that the challenge “is to devise a system of education for all people that respects the epistemological and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous and Western cultural traditions” (Barnhardt, 2007, p. 8). In Saskatchewan, educators do not have easy and ready access to Indigenous knowledge systems. As well, space must be created for Indigenous knowledge. It would be interesting to know if the Saskatchewan Ministry

of Education removed any curricular content before adding Treaty content in 2008. Was there consideration made for how to create space for Indigenous worldview?

Additionally, teachers need opportunities and adequate time to incorporate Indigenous knowledge in deep and meaningful ways. Currently, some teachers may view Treaty Education as an add-on and little additional time has been provided to assist teachers in their own learning and planning. As well, teachers must have adequate and appropriate resources for their students. Mandating Treaty Education is simply not enough— a new system must be devised. As well, Treaty catalyst teachers could be a good resource in schools to help further this work, especially if time and space is created to elevate its importance.

### **5.3.4 Access to Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Other Support People**

An emergent theme raised by research participants was the reliance on Elders and Knowledge Keepers to cover Treaty content. Participants view Elders and Knowledge Keepers as vital to humanizing our colonial history through story. Elders were also viewed as essential to sharing Indigenous ways of knowing.

One of the perceived barriers to Treaty Education was the cost of bringing in Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Austerity budgets have made it difficult for schools to offer extras like honoraria for guest speakers. Research participants also expressed that it is more difficult to access human supports like teachers on assignment, consultants, and coordinators. In-school supports like teacher librarians are becoming fewer in number. In 2017 an austerity budget was released in Saskatchewan and many school divisions had no choice but cut back on resource people. The *Globe and Mail* reported: "education certainly did its part in the world of austerity for the province in helping to balance the budget, and there were a lot of tough decisions that came with that," (Graham, 2017). One fallout of the austerity budget was the loss of adequate human support people such as school division Elders, Knowledge Keepers, teacher librarians, and consultants. The loss of these support people is another factor intensifying teacher workload as teachers now have to try to fill in the void left in the wake of these cuts.

One research participant raised concern for Elders and Knowledge Keepers. She stated that she believes the system is burning them out. St. Denis (2007) quoted an Indigenous student who stated:

It is tiring and exhausting to try and educate people all the time, it's like when someone has something negative to say, we find ourselves having to explain to people the events from contact to present day, and even that does not persuade negative practices completely. (p. 1083)

It is exhausting for marginalized people to have to continue to explain their oppression to people who are colonial blind. If teachers had easy access to resources that contain Indigenous knowledge systems, that were appropriate for students, the work of Elders and Knowledge Keepers could be better utilized. Instead of Elders focusing on beading, drumming, and storytelling— which is surface culture, they could be teaching educators about deep culture, and how to learn from the Land<sup>13</sup>, and the history of colonization.

However, cultural revitalization and properly incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems on its own will not be enough. Concern over protocol was one of the reasons some research participants felt they had to rely on Elders and Knowledge Keepers— to feel secure in knowing that they were teaching Treaty Education and Indigenous knowledge systems correctly. St. Denis (2007) believes that “it is to the advantage of the status quo to have Aboriginal people preoccupied with authenticity” (p. 1085). When people focus on cultural authenticity, they ignore all of the conscious and unconscious ways that White hegemony continues. The focus of incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems should be to examine the beliefs and power structures that hold Western knowledge in the highest regard while marginalizing Indigenous peoples.

Ignorance as resistance has been a consistent theme in this section. The Saskatchewan curriculum, Treaty Education Outcomes 2013, and the OTC Treaty resource kit do not align. Student-appropriate resources are difficult for teachers to locate. Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge systems has been an expectation, yet it is another area that has not been properly resourced. These factors have created a situation that may enable teachers to deploy ignorance as resistance. Some teachers may just ignore Treaty Education altogether by claiming they do not

<sup>13</sup> Land is capitalized to signify its importance as our life-giving mother.

have the proper time or resources to do this work. In the next section I will focus on ignorance as resistance from students and parents.

### **5.3.5 Facing Ignorance as Resistance from Students and Parents**

Many of the research participants work in schools that have a predominantly Indigenous populations. When asked if they face resistance to Treaty Education, most of them said that they had not. However, some research participants had experienced resistance from White-settler students. Gabe and James both offered examples of White-settler resistance from male students. Morgan experienced similar resistance from male White-settler students, especially when teaching her students about White privilege.

James, a high school educator, believes that some students are resistant to Treaty Education because it offers a counter hegemonic narrative which conflicts with what they are learning from their parents. I have also experienced this kind of resistance from White-settler students. Similar to my own experiences, James explained that students will resist by stating that their parents do not believe the narrative being offered at school.

According to Schick (2013):

Resisting discomforting national narratives as a way of regaining Whitespace is not a simple act done by uninformed people. It is a practice of how to perform White racial knowledge in a way that manages to hold up a favorable image of whites to themselves while simultaneously reinforcing universal White privilege as a naturalized entitlement. (p.13)

It is not simply that educators and Treaty Education are up against ignorance that can be cured with knowledge. Parental resistance can be seen to be a reassertion of White space, White identity, and White superiority. The power of the group is held through the resistance to counter hegemonic narratives. “White racial knowledge limits and defines what whites are prepared to hear about a subordinate group” (Schick, 2013, p. 13) while White innocence is maintained. Committed Treaty educators can attempt to trouble the dominant narrative, and the challenge will be that White-settler parents can and will resist as a measure to retain White power. In this sense, Treaty educators are up against White-settler society.

Gabe, also a White-settler high school teacher, explained that some of the resistance that he faces comes from White-settler male students who are “high status.” He explained that these are White males who are smart, popular, and often athletic. Gabe related the example of one

particular male student who would resist by citing the work of conservative Jordan Peterson, a psychology professor from the University of Toronto. Peterson released a series of videos on YouTube criticizing political correctness and the Canadian government's Bill C-16. The bill added gender identity and expression to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code, making it illegal to discriminate against someone based on their gender expression ("Jordan Peterson," n.d.). Gabe explained that it was necessary to make space for students to resist, and that simply silencing discussion did little to further the learning.

According to Garrett and Segall (2013), "Resistance points us to problematic situations for the learner who is implicated and therefore discomforted by the discussion, the lecture, or the question" (p. 298). They further add that the resistance does not prevent the learner from learning. Instead they contend that resistance is what a learner does once they have learned something. Resistance can be expressed in defiant clarity or in other more subtle ways. For students, resistance is deployed as an "unconscious ploy, a strategic compromise" (Garret & Segall, 2013, p. 298). The aim of resistance is to keep dialogue at a level that is comfortable to all parties.

In the example provided by Gabe, his White-settler male student cited the work of Jordan Peterson to support his contention of student resistance to the learning. This resistance was not subtle, but instead was done with defiance and clarity. While the discourse may have been at a comfortable level for this White male student, it certainly could have been highly charged and uncomfortable for other students. Educators may feel the need to shut down dialogue that creates an atmosphere that does not feel safe for everyone. Garrett and Segall (2013) offer that we "work within the structures of ignorance and resistance in ways that produce a positive tension in which new understandings and interpretations of the teaching/learning encounter can be conceptualized" (p. 300). By his own assertion, this is what Gabe is attempting to do. He did admit that it is difficult and complicated to navigate these discourses with students.

In their research with teacher candidates, Garrett and Segall (2013) state:

We ought to help teacher candidates understand that just because they are implicated in the raced (or classed, gendered, sexed, and otherwise marked positions) conditions of society, classrooms, and pedagogy, it does not mean that they are solely responsible. (p. 64)



Confronting white privilege and white superiority can be a destabilizing process for both teachers and students. Students may need time to work through and process the emotions that come along with the difficult work of examining white power and privilege.

Morgan, a middle years educator said that she gave her students time to journal their feelings, especially after some highly charged discussions with lots of resistance. She shared that the journaling gave her students time and space to express their thoughts in a manner that felt safe to everyone.

### **5.3.6 Multiculturalism and Racialized Immigrants**

Another barrier that Treaty educators face is when newcomers to Canada take up the dominant narrative. Morgan, a middle years educator, described a situation where a Black student was resistant to learning about the unfulfilled promises in the Treaties. He continued to resist by stating that Black people did not get any compensation for slavery and questioned why Indigenous peoples were entitled to more than other racialized immigrants of color, especially those who had undergone slavery.

Schick (2013) cites Dion who stated:

Canadians refuse to know the racism that fueled colonization sprang from a system that benefits all non-aboriginal (sic) people, not just the European settlers of long ago. This refusal to know is accomplished through various discourses including a notion of meritocracy and just rewards, reliance on a putative and unbridgeable 'cultural difference' of the other, and on the limited belief in racism as an individualized act of intolerance and not a long-standing national project. (p 10)

The refusal to know Canadian history furthers hegemonic notions that Indigenous peoples are to blame for staggering rates of poverty, over representation in the justice system and foster care system. The individual is blamed, and the system is free of scrutiny.

According to St. Denis (2011) multiculturalism, as a part of public policy, has aided in the undermining of Aboriginal sovereignty. The celebration of cultural diversity distracts from ongoing colonization and its impacts on Indigenous peoples. A multicultural approach to education, without a critical focus, encourages White-settler Canadians to continue on with the status quo, without asking them to consider the ongoing forms of oppression and marginalization

of Indigenous peoples. Learning and recognizing the colonial history of Canada is paramount to understanding the historical relationships and the fight for Aboriginal sovereignty.

Indigenous peoples and racialized immigrants of color have similar concerns over multicultural discourses used to manage and silence competing interests within the nation. Anti-immigrant sentiment is a concern for racialized immigrants of color, but Indigenous peoples are still fighting for their own sovereignty. According to Schick (2012) and Mackey (2004), common discourses frame Canada as benevolent and accepting of brown and black immigrants, while at the same time being taken advantage of for that kindness. Common discourses include framing immigrants and refugees to Canada as stealing jobs and “taking over”. Schick (2012) states “that they will abuse ‘our generosity as a country,’ that we are ‘too open,’ that will be ‘flooded’ by them as they ‘take advantage’ of us, the deserving citizens to whom this country legitimately belongs” ( p. 9). Racialized immigrants of color, refugees, and Indigenous peoples do have much in common when it comes to racism and who is thought to be a true Canadian. White settler Canadians are seen to be the legitimate owners of the land and deserving of any and all entitlements. Liberal forms of multicultural education<sup>14</sup> do not ask us to consider the forms of racism and power that have historically maintained these structures. A critical multicultural education approach would ask teachers to consider the forms of power and racism that marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples.

However, St. Denis (2011) states “Aboriginal groups suggest that multiculturalism is a form of colonialism and works to distract from the recognition and redress of Indigenous groups” (p. 308). In the case of Indigenous peoples and racialized immigrants of color, multiculturalism allows White-settler Canadians to feel benevolent and kind— for simply allowing people of color to live here. Common approaches to multicultural education allow White settlers to stay colonial blind and power blind.

In the case of Morgan’s Black student, ongoing and unfulfilled Treaty promises are dismissed with the notion that all people of color have gotten the same raw deal, and one group

<sup>14</sup> Liberal forms of multicultural education include liberal multicultural education and pluralist multicultural education.

should not be privileged over the other. Taking a purely neutral stance to Treaty Education will not uncover the various forms of power and racism that undermine Indigenous sovereignty. As a result, the hidden forms of systemic racism will continue to marginalize and oppress until a critical anti-racist focus becomes the norm. Students must be taught to see the hidden forms of racism and power— without this focus little will change.

### **5.3.7 Student Resistance**

A theme that I sometimes hear among my colleagues is that their students are sick of learning about Treaty Education. This was also an issue raised by Morgan, a White-settler middle-years teacher participant who works with prominently White-settler students. She raised some points that are worthy of consideration. Morgan related that her students claimed that they were tired of learning about Treaty Education, but when she questioned them to determine their level of knowledge, her students knew very little.

Morgan wondered if her students were displaying some form of resistance. We can speculate that Morgan's students are likely deploying ignorance as resistance. However, she also wondered if certain topics were being taught too often and others not enough. Morgan's specific concern is that students may resist the learning because they falsely believe they already know everything about Treaty Education.

The problem of teachers over teaching certain topics may be indicative of the fact that the Treaty outcomes are not aligned with curriculum. As well teachers feel there are a lack of appropriate resources to use with students. In the last few years, Orange Shirt Day has pushed the history of residential schools into mainstream education. Each year schools participate in Orange Shirt Day, and each year educators are tasked with addressing the day and the meaning of the orange shirt with students. In the past five years my colleagues and I have noticed that the topic of residential schools is becoming fairly well resourced with a plethora of stories written at a wide range of levels.

Teaching, and perhaps even over teaching, narratives of residential school survivors is a problem if teachers are intentionally or unintentionally fostering narratives of First Nations people being too damaged to succeed and positioning their students to consider the plight of the poor First Nations people. Gebhard (2017) illustrates how this can be a problem: "Popular

residential school stories produce a view of Indigenous peoples that asks non-Indigenous peoples to take on roles of helpers and saviors” (p. 21). Educators must consider how to balance the humanizing aspect of story with an examination of the power structures that allowed for the creation of residential schools.

Requiring teachers to teach Treaty Education with a lack of appropriate resources for students could create situations where more widely known colonial histories are over taught producing damaging narratives about Indigenous peoples. Additionally, with the current focus on multiculturalism, participation in Orange Shirt Day can allow non-Indigenous teachers and in-school administrators to feel benevolent of their inclusion of Indigenous history, while remaining blind to the systemic racism within the institution of education. According to St. Denis (2011), “multiculturalism in schools makes it possible for non-Aboriginal teachers and schools to trivialize Aboriginal content and perspectives, and at the same time believe that they are becoming more inclusive and respectful” (p. 313). Properly resourcing Treaty Education would go a long way to ensuring that a broader range of Treaty Education is covered. It is also necessary to cover Treaty Education content with a more critical focus. By this I mean that the effects of colonization must be included. Educators must teach students how to see and challenge hidden forms of power and racism.

## **5.4 Supports**

For most research participants, supports for Treaty Education fell into two categories: human supports and professional development. Research participants perceived that the human supports for Treaty Education were now underfunded and that accessing school division support people was becoming more of a challenge. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are viewed as critical to Treaty Education. Administrators were also viewed as a significant support system for teachers.

### **5.4.1 Administrators**

In-school administrators were seen as a significant support system for research participants engaged in Treaty Education. School based administrators empower teachers by creating a system of support. While Treaty Education content is neutral, some parents may view it as too progressive or even political. Referring to Treaty Education, Schick (2013) states: “even

though most of the teaching will be devoid of political orientation, this most commonplace type of culturally responsive teaching still meets with resistance” (p. 3). From experience, and in speaking with colleagues, educators are cautious of parental resentment and resistance.

While Treaty Education is a modest requirement, the overall counter hegemonic narrative will often be met by both overt and passive resistance (Tupper, 2011). Research participants engaged in Treaty Education shared the importance of a supportive administrator. Even though curriculum directs teachers to cover Treaty Education content, teachers can still fear parent reprisal. Simply put, an in-school administrator can encourage teachers to understand that covering Treaty content is the right thing to do, even in the face of resistance and resentment.

Administrators have the ability to elevate the importance of Treaty Education. By corollary they also have the ability to diminish its significance and the work of teachers who engage with Treaty Education. Both Morgan, a White-settler middle-years teacher, and Angela, a Métis high school teacher, spoke to the ways that in-school administrators can outwardly appear to be supportive of Treaty Education while not actually empowering teachers to do good work. They both explained that their school-based administrators verbalized their support of Treaty Education, but that support failed to go beyond words. Morgan said that this created a situation at her school where only pockets of committed teachers were actually doing the work of Treaty Education.

According to Needham and Cottrell (2016) one of the single most important factors influencing the success of Treaty teachings is the presence of leaders who are committed and passionate. Most of the research participants felt that their administrators were supportive of Treaty Education, including professional development, as long as there was no extra cost to be incurred. This is a clear effect of the current austerity era. Angela also pointed out that there is always money for high school physical education programs, but very little is allotted to social sciences for the purpose of Treaty Education.

Needham and Cottrell (2016) also state that it is not simply enough for school-based administrators to place a focus on Treaty Education. They contend that school divisions need to begin with the leadership of the director, superintendents, and board trustees. School division leaders need to understand the importance of Treaty Education to make it a priority for the entire school division. Needham and Cottrell (2016) state: “Research on leadership, especially in

context of organizational change, favour forms of distributed leadership across an array of positions within a school, rather than an emphasis on individual leaders” (p. 14). It is not possible for one person to have all of the knowledge necessary to create school division improvements in Treaty Education and the emphasis should not be on individual leaders, but the system as a whole (Needham & Cottrell, 2016). School division leaders should have a strong understanding of the colonial history, power structures, and forms of racism that have allowed colonization to continue. A deep understanding of the history of colonization is necessary in understanding the importance of Treaty Education, and the work that must be done.

The data collected in this study supports the findings of Needham and Cottrell (2016). Research participants engaged in the Following Their Voices program all stated that their administrators were highly engaged and committed to Treaty Education. According to James, a White-settler high school educator and a FTV lead teacher, the structure of the program and the supports in the school enable the work of Treaty Education to be prioritized. James stated that when met with resistance from students or parents, he was able to access additional support from the Indigenous student advocate at his school. This example demonstrates that broad based support from the school division, administrators, and support staff help to elevate the work of Treaty Education.

#### **5.4.2 Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Support People**

Some research participants were overly concerned with protocol. They viewed Elders and Knowledge Keepers as vital to ensuring that the information shared with students was correct for the region they taught in. Other participants believed that story telling is of significant importance, and Elders and Knowledge Keepers were valued for their ability to share stories that build empathy and compassion. There were concerns that certain Elders and Knowledge Keepers are in demand so much that an unfair burden has been placed upon them. A few research participants were able to access monetary funds for honorariums. Unfortunately, the Saskatchewan Government has implemented austerity budgets in recent years, and public education has had to make significant cutbacks, making funding for honorariums more difficult to procure. Research participants viewed school division consultants and coordinators as important for providing guidance, professional development, and access to resources. However, they were aware that these positions are vulnerable to cuts because of the austerity budgets.

### 5.4.3 Professional Development

Three of the research participants had taken the OTC Treaty resource training in prior years. They viewed it to be helpful in learning about the information contained in the Treaty resource kit. Seven out of 11 participants had taken some form of Treaty catalyst training in their school division. For many, this training was the beginning of their understanding of true history of Canada. It was the impetus of a great passion for Treaty Education and led many on a journey to further their knowledge.

These findings align with the work of Needham and Cottrell (2016) who state:

Once they embraced the role of Treaty catalyst teacher, many of the participants became more passionate about work and were excited to consider engaging in additional professional development and asserting leadership in that area. For some veteran teachers, delving deeply into Treaty teachings was a refreshing and energizing experience that required them to engage with new materials and new curricular material. (p. 21).

This supports the work of Campbell (2017) who said that that “effective professional learning that changes thinking, knowledge, and practice requires considerable time” (p. 17). Many treaty catalyst teachers took workshops over several full or half day sessions. A few participants mentioned that they took the training over the course of a few years.

DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) suggest that institutional support is important as a school division can provide the vision for “the development of intercultural competence” (p.455). The literature certainly supports professional development like the catalyst approach because it can create enduring change and increased cultural competency.

A follow-up question was asked of those trained as Treaty catalyst teachers— were they ever used as supports within their own schools? Most of them replied that they were not but that they would be willing to lead professional development for their own staff. A few were actively providing support to their own school staff. It would likely be beneficial for school divisions to find ways to help engage trained Treaty catalyst teachers in professional development on their own staffs through professional learning communities.

Christine, an Indigenous high school teacher, noted that the blanket exercise was a powerful way to share the history of colonization in Canada. After experiencing the Blanket Exercise myself, I jumped at the opportunity to take the facilitator training. I agree with Christine

that the blanket exercise provides a meaningful and interactive experience for participants. Kelsey, a White-settler middle years teacher, mentioned professional development for Land-based education, but she felt that few spaces are made available for Saskatoon teachers.

## 5.5 Resource Location

Research participants shared that there are many Treaty Education resources online (see Table 5.3 ). Some, like James who is a high school teacher, felt that there were so many resources that it was overwhelming. These teachers said they were using Google to find these resources. Other provinces were noted for having good materials that teachers could access. The provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario were all mentioned as having useful resources. The difficulties are that these materials are not all appropriate for Saskatchewan, they are time consuming to locate, and they often require adaptation for use with students.

Some participants also access videos on APTN, CBC, and the OTC websites. Books were mentioned to be good resources, especially when they were available in one location in a school library. Emma mentioned that her school created a Treaty resource section in their library and this has made accessing resources, including stories easier. Elders and Knowledge Keepers were considered to be a great source for resources and information.

**Table 5.3 Research Participant Recommended Resources**

Books/Magazines	Videos	Websites	Activities
The Teachings of the Bear Clan by Elder Danny Musqua— The Seven Fires by Dianne Knight	Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) -First Contact documentary	Histórica Canada website	The Alien Act
Rupert Ross Dancing With a Ghost	The Secret Path Gord Downie (in book form too)	Canada A People's History— CBC	The Blanket Exercise



Books/Magazines	Videos	Websites	Activities
		a resource for grades 10-12	
Indigenous Rights Chelsea Vowel	Aaron Peters The Perfect Crime (music video)	Canada A People's History— CBC a resource for grades 10-12	Treaty 6 Simulation at Fort Carlton
Kayak— We Are All Treaty People September 2018 issue	Murray Sinclair videos on YouTube	Learning Alberta— Indigenous and Treaty Rights	
Red Wolf Jennifer Dance	CBC 8th Fire Series	Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Blackboard	
	Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) videos	North East School Division— Curriculum Corner	

## 5.6 The Ideal Treaty Resource Kit

When I asked research participants what they wanted in an ideal Treaty Education kit, their ideas were fairly consistent (see Table 5.4). Overwhelmingly they want resources that align to curriculum that they can use with their students. These resources would be written at appropriate reading levels for students. Having resources that were appropriate for students would allow teachers to do the work of investigating and exploring with their students. Treaty materials should be designed to engage students in investigation and exploration of the content.

**Table 5.4 The Ideal OTC Treaty Resource Kit**

student friendly resources	updated videos
activities that engage students	Land-based activities
access to everything online	organized by themes not just grades
aligns to curriculum	contains stories that help students develop empathy and compassion
resources that aid with incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems	information on correct protocol for a region
a list of activities and sites for different regions of the province	a picture file from pre-contact to present
items to be passed around the classroom (primary level)	resources to support parent learning
a historic timeline that can be displayed in the classroom or an activity that allows for its creation	

Research participants also asked for hands-on activities. The participants recognized that papers to read and worksheets to fill out were a Eurocentric way of teaching and learning. They want help to break out of that pattern. Research participants stated that they would like to see a resource that has background information for teachers, and a summarized condensed version of that information for students. They would also like to have access to hands-on or discursive activities to go along with lessons. With proper resources student engagement should increase.

Additionally, teachers want to have a new and revamped Treaty Education kit that is completely digital. This kit would be cross-referenced and organized through themes, grades, and curriculum links. This would help teachers cut down on the amount of time that they spend looking for something. As Christine pointed out, organizing Treaty Education resources by themes would help teachers when they are trying to locate resources that would be ideal for the reading level of their students, not just the level.

As well, research participants would also like updated videos that are more engaging for students. They would also like to have a historic timeline that can be displayed in the classroom. Many felt they would want the timeline up all year so that it could be referenced to as needed. Some suggested that a digital picture file from pre-contact to present would be helpful for students to gain a sense of perspective. Some wanted a list of sites that could be visited in their region.

Research participants also want a resource with Land-based activities. Ideally, they want to be able to take their students outside and do meaningful Treaty Education on the Land. They would like a resource that gives them some activities and guidance so that this work can be done more easily and with increased confidence. Ideally research participants would also like resources to help with embedding Indigenous knowledge systems into all areas of curricula.

It was also thought to be helpful to have a parent resource with broad themes to be covered in a school year. This resource could contain information that aims to minimize misconceptions and parental resistance. Participants felt that communication with parents about why Treaty Education is important was one way to combat resistance. A resource that could be shared with parents could likely be a helpful tool.

Educators also felt that they needed help with protocol for their area. Having some kind of an online resource that teachers could use to look for this information was thought to be helpful. Stories from an Indigenous perspective are also considered to be highly important, but teachers do not always know how to locate or access stories. They would like some kind of an easy way to locate and use story in their classrooms.

## **5.7 Addressing Issues of Power and Privilege**

Research participants were asked to discuss how they teach about issues of power and privilege. Surprisingly several teachers were not actively finding ways to raise this issue. The reasons to avoid addressing power and privilege varied. Emma, a grade three teacher, felt her students were too young and could not understand such a big idea. Mary, a veteran teacher with over 30 years of experience, was not really sure what the term meant. Christine, a young Indigenous teacher, also struggled to understand the term until it was explained to her.

Gabe and James, both high school teachers, were actively working to teach about and disrupt systems of power. They both did this work in fairly different ways. James works with predominantly Indigenous students, and he uses a talking circle to acknowledge his own White male heterosexual privilege. Gabe works with students who come from privilege. He uses the work of Howard Zinn with his students.

Morgan actively works with her middle years students to understand power and privilege. Morgan discussed the overt resistance that she faced in great detail. Reflecting on her experience, Morgan wished that she knew how to navigate resistance when it occurred. She admitted that she was not prepared to deal with the strong emotional outbursts that her students displayed.

One of the TRC calls to action is to identify teacher-training needs relating to Treaty Education (2015). Teachers need more professional development on how to teach their students about power and privilege. Educators also need to learn how to trouble the dominant narrative, and why this is vitally important to breaking the cycle of colonization. Educators will also need to learn how to help students navigate the resistance and emotion that comes with unsettling

strongly held misconceptions about our national identity. It may also be important to allow educators time to collaborate and support each other while engaging in this emotional work.

According to Schick (2012), “power relations and racism have produced such unequal outcomes in Canadian society and especially on the prairies” (p. 3). Teachers must not ignore issues of power, privilege, and racism. The challenge is that many teachers likely believe in meritocracy, essentialism, and take a color-blind approach to teaching. As well, like Morgan, they are not sure how to navigate White resistance and resentment.

With the current multicultural approach to teaching about the treaties, many teachers are not likely discussing issues of power and privilege with their students as it is not required. Many teachers may not even understand why it is important. According to St. Denis (2010) many Indigenous teachers “recognize the need for meaningful Indigenous content and perspectives that address the way in which racism and colonialism shape the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada” (p. 314). She also contends that non-Indigenous colleagues often seem to want to avoid topics that address issues of power, privilege, racism, and the effects of colonization. They only seem to want to talk about fluff like surface culture, which is not surprising given that liberal forms of multicultural education have been the norm.

To date, Treaty Education is tolerated when it comes from a power-blind multicultural perspective, one that covers superficial cultural learning like beading, dance, and drumming. Tackling issues of power, privilege, and racism can trigger White resentment and resistance. However, there is a price to be paid for taking a power-blind multicultural approach, and that price is paid by Indigenous who continue to be oppressed and marginalized.

According to St. Denis (2010), multiculturalism pits one group against each other for power and resources, which can intensify misunderstandings and cause hostility. Power-blind

liberal forms of multicultural education are also inadequate because they do not combat social inequality. The celebration of diversity does nothing to create social equality— it perpetuates White innocence. Multiculturalism also separates people into groups of “old stock”<sup>15</sup> Canadian and the cultural other. The understanding of other cultures ends at dress, food, dance, and entertainment and lacks the context of power, privilege, and racism. As well, power blind liberal forms of multicultural education have zero ability to sort out the claims of minority groups. Indigenous rights and the Land question<sup>16</sup> can be ignored by taking a purely multicultural position.

Putting Treaty Education into the context of power, privilege, and racism is necessary for understanding history and the marginalization of Indigenous peoples. Without this perspective, power cannot be dismantled. In this view decolonization is merely a dream.

## **5.8 Summary**

The mandate of Treaty Education has yet to be taken up by all teachers in Saskatchewan. The government mandated Treaty Education over a decade ago, and the resources to meet that mandate are still inadequate. Recent austerity budgets in Saskatchewan have created cuts to programs and supports that work to lessen the effectiveness of Treaty Education.

The non-alignment of Treaty outcomes with curriculum outcomes adds to teacher workload intensification, and also makes it easier for teachers to ignore the Treaty outcomes altogether. Aligning Treaty outcomes to curriculum would certainly help teachers cover the

<sup>15</sup> The term “old stock” Canadian was used by former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Oved, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> The Land question highlights the ambiguity in the Treaties in Saskatchewan. Land claims has a different connotation.

content better. As well, integrating Indigenous knowledge systems in effective and powerful ways requires better resources. Space within the curriculum should be made for Indigenous knowledge, rather than it is becoming an add-on and an additional task already overworked teachers must find time for.

Taking a power-blind multicultural approach to Treaty Education will not dismantle systems of power and oppression. To create a more equal and just society, teachers must address issues of power and privilege with their students. This work is at the heart of the TRC calls to action. It will be imperative to have well educated and well-trained teachers carrying out this work. The government has mandated this work, and they must be support it financially.

## Chapter 6 Conclusions: Wrapping Up the Study

*“The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts.  
When it comes to truth and reconciliation, we are forced to go the distance.”*

*-Justice Murray Sinclair*

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015*

It may be tempting to rush the work of reconciliation—as a way to claim that we are doing something. In our haste, we may opt to take on superficial measures that appear sexy, but don’t actually bring about reconciliation. There is much work to be done in the education sector. Many White-settler teachers must begin the uncomfortable work of unpacking their settler backpacks. Governments must commit to properly funding resource creation and professional development for Treaty Education. The proper space for this work must be made. There will be no easy short cuts. This is important work and we must commit to going the distance. In this last chapter I will share my conclusions for how Treaty Education can bring forth reconciliation. To be reader friendly the research question is restated.

### **Research Question:**

What are supports and obstacles for teachers committed to Treaty Education in Saskatchewan?

### **6.1 Implications for this Study**

Just over a decade ago Treaty Education was mandated in the province of Saskatchewan. This study offers insights into where those Saskatchewan teachers, engaged with Treaty Education are finding supports and where they are encountering obstacles. In its current state, Treaty Education requires that teachers spend significant time locating and adapting resources to meet the needs of their students. Many of the positions where teachers once gained support for Treaty Education have been reduced or eliminated due to ongoing austerity budgets. As an example, teacher librarians used to offer support in resource location, but their time has been reduced or eliminated altogether. Now many teachers are searching for resources on their own. Teachers dedicated to Treaty Education feel that locating, adapting, and creating resources is time consuming, and likely a barrier for teachers who have yet to become engaged with the topic. The



current state of the resources made available to teachers may enable ignorance as resistance for teachers who have yet to engage with Treaty Education.

Treaty content must be aligned to curriculum, and resources for student use should be created within a timely manner. Treaty Education should not be reduced to an add-on to curriculum. Adequate space within the curriculum must be made for Treaty Education so its importance is elevated and recognized. This may mean removing some traditional content to be replaced by Treaty Education. Documenting and creating resources for the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge systems is a first step. However, creating the resources will not be enough. The proper space for this knowledge must be created by decreasing Western Knowledge systems that currently dominate curriculum. Finding the correct blend of Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge will be beneficial to all students and society as a whole, especially if we aim to live sustainably on our finite planet.

Educators engaged in Treaty Education must find substantial support from school division leadership, especially school-based administrators. Professional development, like Treaty catalyst training, is strongly associated with teachers who are invested in Treaty Education. If properly funded, resources and professional development opportunities, would yield proper results.

A critical multicultural or anti-racist focus is an effective way to examine power structures that marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. Without this focus, liberal forms of multicultural education will do little to challenge hegemony. However, educators may need more professional development in how to deconstruct White privilege and how to work through student and parent resistance.

From this study there are barriers that need to be addressed. Due to the current era of austerity in public education some of the required improvements will be difficult to address. In an ideal world, adequate time, attention, and financial support would be allocated to strengthen Treaty Education.

The TRC call to action 63 (i) states: “Developing and implementing Kindergarten to grade 12 curriculum and learning resources on Indigenous peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools” (2015). It could be argued that the province of Saskatchewan already met this call to action in 2008 when Treaty Education was mandated. However, mandating Treaty Education was only the first step, more work must be done,

including resource development. This research makes clear that there are four main areas that need further development and support:

- 1.) Aligning the Treaty outcomes to curriculum
- 2.) The creation of streamlined Treaty resources that adequately meet the needs of teachers and students
- 3.) The documentation of Indigenous knowledge systems and the creation of resources to share this knowledge
- 4.) Taking an anti-racist or critical multicultural approach to Treaty Education

### **6.1.1 For the Office of the Treaty Commission**

In an era of austerity and intensification of teacher workload, teachers overwhelmingly expressed that time is the biggest barrier to teaching Treaty Education. The time needed to locate and create resources is onerous, and one that teachers do not feel they have adequate time for. The current state of Treaty Education resources enables ignorance as resistance as educators can claim that they simply do not have the time or resources take up this work. Teachers who are committed to Treaty Education are struggling to resource this work, their voices must be heard.

Research participants agreed that the OTC Treaty kit had a plethora of information, but it is not useful anymore. There are three reasons for this: one, the resources are felt to be too advanced for students, two, the content does not align to curriculum, and three many teachers are no longer colonial blind and do not need this information as a baseline. They now need resources that they can use with their students. Teachers expressed that an ideal Treaty Education kit would have background information for teachers as well as content that can be shared with students. This content should be vetted by teachers, who are in the best position to assess student for comprehension.

Overwhelmingly participants of this research want to see an updated Treaty resource kit that engages students in this important work. They felt that the best way to achieve this would be to include activities that allow students to work with the material rather than be passive participants in a knowledge transfer. When asked about what an ideal Treaty Education resource kit would contain, teachers responded with several ideas (see Table 5.5). Resources that aid

teachers to present this material from a critical multicultural or anti-racist perspective would certainly be beneficial.

The creation of resources to embed Indigenous Knowledge systems into all areas of curriculum would be beneficial. *Creating a Place for Indigenous Knowledge in Education: The Alaska Native Knowledge Network* by Barnhardt (2007) may offer valuable insight into how this could be accomplished in Saskatchewan. Educators invested in Treaty Education expressed a desire to do this work, but they also felt that they lacked the knowledge for how to do this well. Documenting and aggregating Indigenous knowledge systems and creating resources to be used in schools would be beneficial.

### **6.1.2 For Teacher Education in Saskatchewan**

The Treaty Outcomes should be aligned to the provincial social studies curriculum. Teachers who are engaged in Treaty Education are in the best position to do this work.<sup>17</sup> It is teachers in the classroom who best understand curriculum as they work to deliver curriculum content daily. The OTC Treaty Resource kit, the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum, and the 2013 Treaty Outcomes should be streamlined. Ideally Treaty outcomes should be easy to locate within the curriculum, and not housed in a stand-alone document outside of curriculum.

Treaty outcomes, including the embedding of Indigenous knowledge, should not be considered or seen as an add-on to already brimming curriculum. The importance of Treaty Education should be elevated, and adequate space should be made within curriculum. This space should be created such that Indigenous Knowledge and perspectives should have equal status with Western knowledge.

Adequate and appropriate resources should be created in a timely manner. Treaty Education has been in place for over a decade and teachers do not feel it is adequately resourced. This work must be made a priority and the resources should be made in the next two to three years. Those resources should be linked to curriculum. When curriculum directs students to

<sup>17</sup> On January 13, 2020, the Saskatchewan government released the curriculum advisory committee for Kindergarten to grade 12 education in Saskatchewan. Shockingly, not one teacher currently in a classroom is on this committee (“Curriculum Advisory Committee,” 2020)

investigate or explore, adequate resources for this learning should be provided. These resources would be easiest to find if they were linked to curriculum and or made available in schools. If the resources cannot be digitally linked to the curriculum, they should be made available in school libraries. Resources should be vetted and clearly indicate age and grade level suitability.

Treaty Education should be shifted from liberal forms of multicultural education to anti-racist or critical multicultural perspectives. Teachers should be examining forms of power with their students. While many teachers understand why this work is important, several research participants expressed how challenging it is to navigate these issues with students. Perhaps coursework in teacher education programs should explore how anti-racist work can be accomplished in a classroom with diverse views. Teacher candidates should be exploring how to teach these issues, and how to navigate the resistance they will encounter from White-settler students and parents.

As well, school-based administrators should have a concrete understanding of why Treaty Education is critically important. A graduate course in anti-racist education should be a requirement so that in-school administrators understand the work that their staffs must undertake. Leadership within this area is key to elevating Treaty Education from an anti-racist perspective within Saskatchewan schools.

### **6.1.3 For Professional Development for Saskatchewan Teachers**

This research has demonstrated a strong connection between the Treaty Catalyst training that developed from *A Time for Significant Leadership* (2009) and teacher engagement in Treaty Education. Treaty catalyst professional development should be expanded to broaden its reach. Perhaps school divisions should require that all employees take this professional development. The program should also include anti-racist and critical multicultural approaches to Treaty Education. A part of that professional development should be learning how to recognize and examine forms of power that continue to marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. As well, educators would benefit from specific professional development dealing with ignorance as resistance. Unsettling counter hegemonic narratives will take courage and strategy. These suggestions are being offered despite the current era of austerity around funding public education in Saskatchewan.

## **6.2 Limitations of My Research**

This study has some limitations for consideration. The specific focus of this research is to examine Treaty Education within Saskatchewan, and much of the information gleaned is specific to this province. The objective is to learn about teacher thoughts on the supports and obstacles faced by Saskatchewan educators invested in Treaty Education. This study is specific to the OTC Treaty resource kit, the Saskatchewan curriculum, and the resources made available to teachers, as such, this information is applicable mainly for Saskatchewan.

However, some of the information on ignorance as resistance may be valuable across Canada, as deconstructing White privilege should be a focus in all jurisdictions. Educators within Canada are likely to encounter ignorance as resistance while taking up this work. Adopting an anti-racist or critical multicultural approach to Treaty Education may require that teachers receive the proper supports and professional development to deal with White-settler resistance to counter hegemonic narratives.

Another limitation of this study is that these are the thoughts of teachers already invested in Treaty Education. The information gathered has come from teachers who wanted to talk about Treaty Education because they care deeply. Teachers engaged in Treaty Education would like to see it more broadly taken up by all teachers in Saskatchewan. This study did not gather information from educators who are resistant to engaging in Treaty Education, however, some speculations could be drawn from the findings. Streamlining the Treaty outcomes and social studies curriculum would certainly give educators more clarity and focus on the mandate. Adequately resourcing for professional development Treaty Education would also make it easier for teachers who may be worried that they lack the sufficient knowledge necessary to do this work well.

## **6.3 Possible Areas for Further Study**

The TRC made 94 calls to action with the hopes that we, as a society, would answer those calls on our path to reconciliation. Subsection (ii) of the 63<sup>rd</sup> call to action states: “Sharing information on best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history” (2015). One of the many goals of Treaty Education should be to learn about hidden and unhidden forms of power. To meet this call to action, information could be gathered on how

educators are teaching about the forms of power and White privilege that marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples. It could also gather information on the ways that teachers are successfully navigating forms of resistance to counter hegemonic narratives.

For example, a longitudinal study could gather insight and information about teacher and student views on Treaty Education and forms of power and privilege before teacher professional development, and then again three years later. This would allow for the sharing of effective teaching practice on achieving one goal of Treaty Education: deconstructing White-privilege and power.

Deconstructing White-power and privilege would go a long way to meeting subsection iii of the 63<sup>rd</sup> call to action: “Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect” (“Truth and Reconciliation,” 2015). Examining forms of power and privilege with students would certainly help foster intercultural understanding, while building empathy, and mutual respect. It is imperative that we, as educators, understand how to do this work well. A longitudinal study would be one way to ascertain how to best approach this work successfully.

In the future perhaps parents could be educated on Treaty Education alongside their children. A future study could look at the merits of this idea and possible ways that information could be shared with parents. It could also track the attitudes and thoughts of parents before and after learning.

## **6.4 Summative Reflections**

We are currently living and working in a neocolonial system that continues to marginalize and oppress Indigenous peoples (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). The cycle of colonization must be broken if we are to ever achieve a postcolonial time. I believe we will reach this era through an enhanced Treaty Education that teachers are prepared for and committed to.

We have had Treaty Education in place for just over a decade, but it is not well resourced or well aligned to curriculum. Our current approach to Treaty Education has been from liberal forms of multicultural education, which does little to deconstruct White power. We have wrongly identified the Indigenous achievement gap with cultural-deficit discourse—the belief that Indigenous children are too disadvantaged to succeed. We have prescribed more culture as the cure. However, we must examine the forms of power that continue to colonize and oppress

Indigenous peoples. Students must be taught to see and understand the systemic, institutional, covert, and overt forms of racism that continue to oppress and marginalize Indigenous peoples because this is how we will reach a postcolonial era.

Getting educators on board may be the most difficult part. Working to get to a postcolonial era will take a financial commitment and courage. The very least that can be done is for government to acknowledge that a debt is owed to Indigenous peoples. The oppression and failure have not been through any fault of their own. It has been the result of colonial and neocolonial policies. It is time to challenge the system through an anti-racist approach to Treaty Education.

The Federal and Saskatchewan provincial governments could take concrete action and fund the educational debt owed to Indigenous students (Orlowski & Cottrell, 2019). That debt can be paid in numerous ways, including the proper resourcing of Treaty Education. We should fund the creation of appropriate resources for Treaty Education and make those resources available to all teachers across the province. We should properly fund the professional development and education that teachers need to do this important work. We should fund the creation of a resource that helps teachers authentically and meaningfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems into all areas of the curriculum. We should continue to fund, and expand funding, for programs like Following Their Voices.

Saskatchewan was the first province in the country of Canada to mandate Treaty Education. This was the first step, and one that took courage and leadership. Saskatchewan should strive to build a superlative Treaty Education program—one that leads the country to a postcolonial era. There are many educators in Saskatchewan that are already leading the way. Hopefully the government will attain the political will and the courage to further this important work.

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## Appendix A



TREATY EDUCATORS

### Research Participants Wanted

Are you passionate about teaching Treaty Education?

Would you be willing to participate in an interview about your experience teaching treaty education?

My research aims to learn about the successes and challenges educators experience when teaching about Treaty Education.

### INTERVIEWS TO TAKE PLACE JULY AND AUGUST 2019

Researcher: Jennifer Gallays under the supervision of Dr. Paul Orlowski  
Department of Education Foundations  
College of Education  
University of Saskatchewan

**EMAIL**  
jlt126@mail.usask.ca

Approved by Behavioral Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions:

- 1.) How long have you been a teacher? What grades and subjects do you teach?
- 2.) Why are you passionate about teaching Treaty Education?
- 3.) What are the barriers that you face?
- 4.) When covering curriculum content, do you find resources easy to locate?
  - a. Where do you get most of your resources?
- 5.) Do you use the OTC Treaty Education kit or the supplemental materials provided this past fall?
  - a. If not, why not? What might make those resources more useful?
  - b. If yes, what parts of the kit do you use?
  - c. Is there anything you would like to see added or changed to make those resources better?
- 6.) Does your division have human supports like catalyst teachers or coaches to support the learning of Treaty Education?
  - a. How do these human supports function and roll out in your school division?
  - b. How valuable are these supports to teachers working in this content area?
- 7.) Why do you think some teachers may not be teaching Treaty Education?
- 8.) Have you done any professional development on Treaty Education?
- 9.) What are some resources that you think teachers should have that would help with covering the content of Treaty Education?
- 10.) Several years ago First Nation and Metis content was infused into our curriculum across subject areas? What are some of the successful ways that you are including FNM content into curricular areas?
- 11.) Have there been resources that make this easier to do?
- 12.) Does your administrator allow or arrange professional development on Treaty Education?
- 13.) How does your administrator value the work of Treaty Education?
- 14.) How do you specifically address issues of power and privilege with your students?
- 15.) How does your classroom environment let student students know that Treaty Education is important to you?

- 16.) What steps do you take to ensure that your classroom feels like a safe place for First Nations and Métis students?

## Appendix C

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Gallays and I am a graduate student working under the supervision of Paul Orlowski in the Education Foundations department at the University of Saskatchewan. I am contacting you because I am conducting research on teacher engagement in treaty education and best practice. I am looking for participants who are currently teaching in grades 6 to 12 in Saskatchewan, and are passionate about treaty education.

Participation in this research would involve participating in one interview for approximately one hour. Interview questions would pertain to the teaching of mandatory treaty education. This study is in response to the TRCs calls to action and investigate best practice, build capacity, assess curriculum, and identify teacher training needs. Specific objectives of the study are to:

- determine how the OTC Treaty Education Kit is being utilized by teachers
- to analyze the thoughts of Saskatchewan teachers on the Treaty resources
- to promote decolonization of Saskatchewan classroom

The identity of teachers will be kept confidential. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Behavioral Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

If you are interested in participating in this research please contact me through email at [jlt126@mail.usask.ca](mailto:jlt126@mail.usask.ca). Interviews to take place in June and July 2019.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Gallays

Graduate Student

Department of Educational Foundations

College of Education

University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Treaty 6 jlt126@mail.usask.ca  
306-227-7793